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The collected works of

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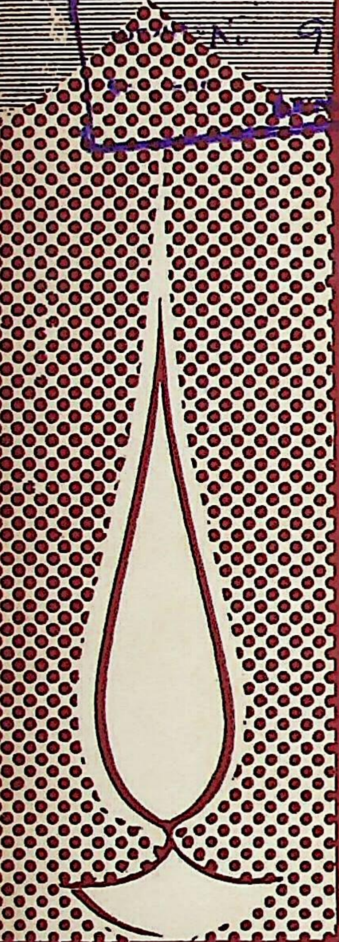
RAMANA MAHARSHI



Edited by
ARTHUR OSBORNE

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THE COLLECTED WORKS
OF
RAMANA MAHARSHI

EDITED BY
ARTHUR OSBORNE

PUBLISHED BY
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We are happy to inform the readers that in this fourth edition of this book, we have been able to include translations of various stray verses composed by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi on different occasions, and which were never published before.

July 15, 1974,
Sri Ramanasramam.

T. N. VENKATARAMAN,
President, Board of Trustees.

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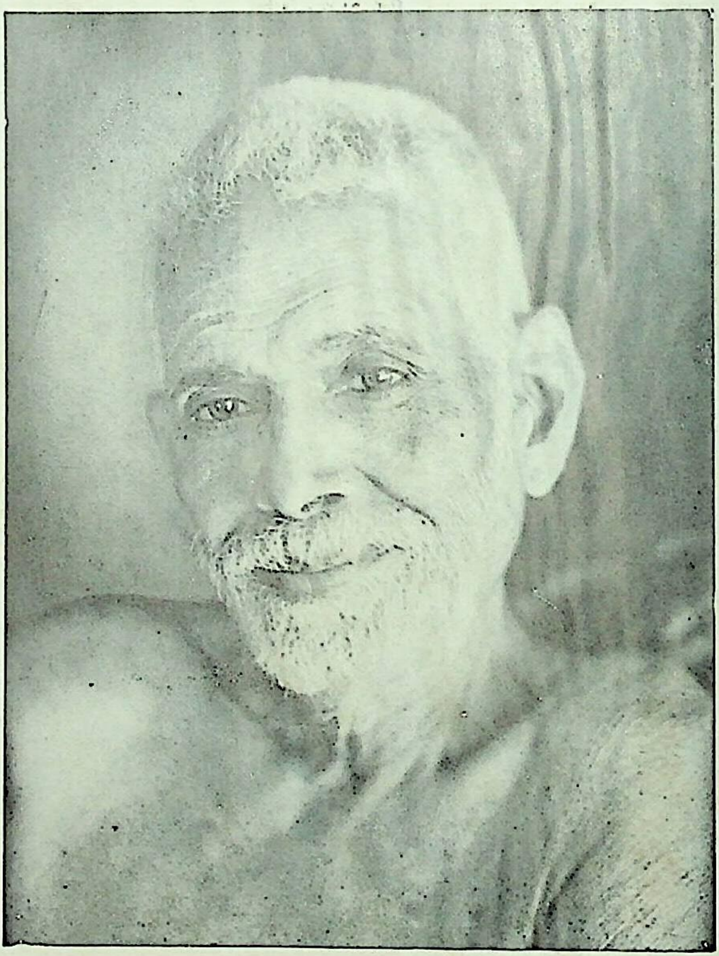

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Preface

When the Maharṣi, Bhagavān Śrī Ramaṇa, realized the Self he was a lad of seventeen in a middle-class Brahmin family of South India. He was still going to High School and had undergone no spiritual training and learnt nothing of spiritual philosophy. Normally some study is needed, followed by long and arduous training, often lasting a whole lifetime, more often still incomplete at the end of a lifetime. As the Sages say, it depends on the spiritual maturity of a person. It can be compared to a pilgrimage, and a day's journey on it to a lifetime : a person's attaining the goal, or how near he comes to it, will depend partly on the energy with which he presses forward and partly on the distance from it at which he wakes up and begins his day's journey. Only in the rarest cases is it possible, as with the Maharṣi, to take a single step and the goal is reached.

To say that the Maharṣi realized the Self does not mean that he understood any new doctrine or theory or achieved any higher state or miraculous powers, but that the 'I' who understands or does not understand doctrine and who possesses or does not possess powers became consciously identical with the Ātman, the universal Self or Spirit. The Maharṣi himself has described in simple, picturesque language how this happened.

> 'It was about six weeks before I left Madura for good that the great change in my life took place. It was quite sudden. I was sitting alone in a room on the first floor of my uncle's house. I seldom had any sickness, and on that day there was nothing wrong with

my health, but a sudden violent fear of death overtook me. There was nothing in my state of health to account for it, and I did not try to account for it or to find out whether there was any reason for the fear. I just felt "I am going to die" and began thinking what to do about it. It did not occur to me to consult a doctor or my elders or friends; I felt that I had to solve the problem myself, there and then.

'The shock of the fear of death drove my mind inwards and I said to myself mentally, without actually framing the words: "Now death has come; what does it mean? What is it that is dying? This body dies." And I at once dramatized the occurrence of death. I lay with my limbs stretched out stiff as though *rigor mortis* had set in and imitated a corpse so as to give greater reality to the enquiry. I held my breath and kept my lips tightly closed so that no sound could escape, so that neither the word "I" nor any other word could be uttered. "Well then," I said to myself, "this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of this body am I dead? Is the body I? It is silent and inert but I feel the full force of my personality and even the voice of the "I" within me, apart from it. So I am Spirit transcending the body. The body dies but the Spirit that transcends it cannot be touched by death. That means I am the deathless Spirit." All this was not dull thought; it flashed through me vividly as living truth which I perceived directly, almost without thought-process. "I" was something very real, the only real thing about my present state, and all the conscious activity connected with my body was centred on that "I". From that

> moment onwards the "I" or Self focused attention on itself by a powerful fascination. Fear of death had vanished once and for all. Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on. Other thoughts might come and go like the various notes of music, but the "I" continued like the fundamental *śruti* note that underlies and blends with all the other notes.[1] Whether the body was engaged in talking, reading, or anything else, I was still centred on "I". Previous to that crisis I had no clear perception of my Self and was not consciously attracted to it. I felt no perceptible or direct interest in it, much less any inclination to dwell permanently in it'.

Such an experience of Identity does not always, or even normally, result in Liberation. It comes to a seeker but the inherent tendencies of the ego cloud it over again. Thenceforward he has the memory, the indubitable certainty, of the True State, but he does not live in it permanently. He has to strive to purify the mind and attain complete submission so that there are no tendencies to pull him back again to the illusion of limited separative being. 'However, the Self-oblivious ego, even when once made aware of the Self, does not get Liberation, that is Self-realization, on account of the obstruction of accumulated mental tendencies. It frequently confuses the body with the Self, forgetting that it is itself in truth the Self'. The miracle was that in the Maharshi's case there was no clouding over, no relapse into ignorance; he remained thenceforward in constant awareness of identity with the One Self.

---

[1] The monotone persisting through a Hindu piece of music, like the thread on which beads are strung, represents the Self persisting through all the forms of being.

For a few weeks after this awakening he remained with his family, leading outwardly the life of a schoolboy although all outer values had lost their meaning for him. He no longer cared what he ate, accepting with like indifference whatever was offered. He no longer stood up for his rights or interested himself in boyish activities. So far as possible he conformed to the conditions of life and concealed his new state of consciousness, but his elders saw his lack of interest in learning and all worldly activities and resented it.

There are many holy places in India, representing different modes of spirituality and different types of path. The holy hill of Aruṇachala with the town of Tiruvannamalai at its foot is supreme among them in that it is the centre of the direct path of Self-enquiry guided by the silent influence of the Guru upon the heart of the devotee, the secret and sacred Heart-Centre of Siva, wherein He always abides as a Siddha (Great One).

It is the seat of Siva who, identified as Dakṣinamurti, teaches in Silence as was exemplified in the life of Bhagavān.

It is the centre and the path where physical contact with the Guru is not necessary but the silent teaching speaks direct to the heart. Even before his Realization it had thrilled the Maharṣi and drawn him like a magnet.

'Hearken ; It stands as an insentient[1] Hill. Its action is mysterious, past human understanding. From the age of innocence it had shone within my mind that Aruṇachala was something of surpassing grandeur,[2] but even when I came to know through another that it was the same as Tiruvannamalai I did not realize its meaning. When it drew me up to it, stilling my mind, and I came close, I saw it (stand) unmoving.'[1]

---

[1] The adjective also bears the meaning 'eradicating objective knowledge'.

[2] 'To view Chidambaram, to be born in Tiruvarur, to die in Benares, or merely to think of Arunachala is to be assured of Liberation.' This couplet is commonly known in the Brahmin households of South India.

Now, seeing that his elders resented his living like a *sādhu* while enjoying the benefits of home life, he secretly left home and went as a *sādhu* to Tiruvannamalai. He never left there again. He remained for more than fifty years as Dakṣinamurti, teaching the path of Self-enquiry to all who came, from India and abroad, from East and West. An Āshram grew up around him. His name of Venkataramaṇ was shortened to Ramaṇa, and he was also called the Maharṣi, that is the Maha Riṣi or Great Sage, a title traditionally given to one who inaugurates a new spiritual path. However his devotees mostly spoke of him as Bhagavān. In speaking to him also they addressed him in the third person as Bhagavān. Self-realization means constant conscious awareness of identity with Ātman, the Absolute, the Spirit, the Self of all; it is the state which Christ expressed when he said: 'I and my Father are One'. This is a very rare thing. Such a one is habitually addressed as Bhagavān, which is a word meaning 'God'.

On Bhagavān's first arrival at Tiruvannamalai there was no question of disciples or teaching. He discarded even apparent interest in the manifested world, sitting immersed in that experience of Being which is integral Knowledge and ineffable Bliss, beyond life and death. Whether the body continued to live was indifferent to him, and he made no effort to sustain it. Others sustained it by bringing him daily the cup of food that was needed for its nourishment; and when he began to return gradually to a participation in the activities of life it was for the spiritual sustenance of those who had gathered around him.

---

[1] *Alternatively*: I realized that It meant Absolute Stillness.

The same applies also to his study of philosophy. He did not need the mind's confirmation of the resplendent Reality in which he was established, only his followers required explanations. It began with Palaniswami, a Malayali attendant who had access to books of spiritual philosophy only in Tamil. He had great difficulty in reading Tamil, so the Maharṣi read the books for him and expounded their essential meaning. Similarly he read other books for other devotees and became erudite without seeking or valuing erudition.

There was no change or development in his philosophy during the half century and more of his teaching. There could be none, since he had not worked out any philosophy but merely recognized the expositions of transcendental Truth in theory, myth, and symbol when he read them. What he taught was the ultimate doctrine of Non-duality or Advaita in which all other doctrines are finally absorbed : that Being is One and is manifested in the universe and in all creatures without ever changing from its eternal, unmanifest Self, much as, in a dream, the mind creates all the people and events a man sees without losing anything by their creation or gaining anything by their re-absorption, without ceasing to be itself.

Some found this hard to believe, taking it to imply that the world is unreal, but the Maharṣi explained to them that the world is only unreal as world, that is to say as a separate, self-subsistent thing, but is real as a manifestation of the Self, just as the events one sees on a cinema screen are unreal as actual life but real as a shadow-show. Some feared that it denied the existence of a Personal God to whom they could pray, but it transcends this doctrine without denying it, for ultimately the worshipper is absorbed back into Union with the Worshipped. The man who prays, the prayer, and the God to whom he prays all have reality only as manifestations of the Self.

Just as the Maharṣi realized the Self with no previous theoretical instruction, so he attached little importance to theory in training his disciples. The theory expounded in the following works is all turned to the practical purpose of helping the reader towards Self-Knowledge—by which is not meant any psychological study but knowing and being the Self which exists behind the ego or mind. Questions that were asked for mere gratification of curiosity he would brush aside. If asked about the posthumous state of man he might answer : 'Why do you want to know what you will be when you die before you know what you are now? First find out what you are now.' Thus he was turning the questioner from mental curiosity to the spiritual quest. Similarly he would parry questions about *samādhi* or about the state of the *Jñāni* (the Self-realized man): 'Why do you want to know about the *Jñāni* before you know about yourself? First find out who you are.' But when questions bore upon the task of self-discovery he had enormous patience in explaining.

The method of enquiry into oneself that he taught goes beyond philosophy and beyond psychology, for it is not the qualities of the ego that are sought but the Self standing resplendent without qualities when the ego ceases to function. What the mind has to do is not to suggest a reply, but to remain quiet so that the true reply can arise. 'It is not right to make an incantation of "Who am I?" Put the question only once and then concentrate on finding the source of the ego and preventing the occurrence of thoughts.'

'Finding the source of the ego' implies concentration on the spiritual centre in the body, the heart on the right side, as explained by the Maharṣi. And, so concentrating, 'to prevent the occurrence of thought'. 'Suggestive replies to the enquiry, such as "I am Śiva", are not to be given to the mind during meditation. The true answer will come of itself. No answer the ego can give can be right. These affirmations or auto-suggestions may be of help to those who follow other methods but not in this method of enquiry. If you keep on asking the reply will come.' The reply comes as a current of awareness in the heart, fitful at first and only achieved by intense effort, but gradually increasing in power and constancy, becoming more spontaneous, acting as a check on thoughts and actions, undermining the ego, until finally the ego disappears and the certitude of pure Consciousness remains.

As taught by the Maharṣi, Self-enquiry embraces *karma-mārga* as well as *jñāna-mārga*, the path of action as well as that of Knowledge, for it is to be used not only as a meditation but in the events of life, assailing the manifestations of egoism by asking to whom is good or bad fortune, triumph or disaster. In this way, the circumstances of life, far from being an obstacle to *sādhana*, are made an instrument of *sādhana*. Therefore those who asked whether they should renounce the life of the world were always discouraged from doing so. Instead they were enjoined to perform their duties in life without self-interest.

It embraces the path of love and devotion also. The Maharṣi said: 'There are two ways: either ask yourself, "Who am I?" or submit.' On another occasion he said: 'Submit to me and I will strike down the mind.' There were many who followed, through love, this path of submission to him. It led to the same goal. He said : ' God, Guru, and Self are not really different but the same.' Those who followed the path of Self-enquiry were seeking the Self inwardly, whereas those who strove through love were submitting to the Guru manifested outwardly. But the two were the same. That is more than ever clear to his devotees now that the Maharṣi has left the body and become the Inner Guru in the heart of each one of them.

It was thus a new and integral path that the Maharṣi opened to those who turn to him. The ancient path of Self-enquiry was pure *jñāna-mārga* to be followed in silent meditation by the hermit and had, moreover, been considered by the Sages unsuited to this *kali-yuga* this spiritually dark age in which we live. What Bhagavān did was not so much to restore the old path as to create a new one adapted to the conditions of our age, a path that can be followed in city or household no less than in forest or hermitage, with a period or meditation each day and constant remembering throughout the day's activities, with or without the support of outer observances.

The Maharṣi wrote very little. He taught mainly through the tremendous power of Spiritual Silence. That did not mean that he was unwilling to answer questions when asked. So long as he felt that they were asked with a sincere motive and not out of idle curiosity, he answered fully whether in speech or writing. However it was the silent influence upon the heart that was the essential teaching.

Nearly everything that he wrote was in response to some request, to meet the specific needs of some devotee, and therefore a short note is given at the beginning of the various items explaining their genesis. This is for interest of the reader, but the particular need that evoked them does not in any way impair the universality of their scope.

It is to be noted that the verse items are not arranged in chronological order. They were arranged in order by Bhagavān himself, for a devotee [1] who kept a private collection of them, and therefore the same order has been retained here.

A word about the translation. The Āshram has translations of the various works, a number of translations of some of them; and all that the present editor has done is to select one and improve the English of it where necessary, without changing the meaning.

A new work, '*Spiritual Instruction*' published during Bhagavān's time which was not included in the first two editions has now been included. A few small additions have also been made in the case of one or two works. They are found in the original Tamil versions published in Bhagavān's time. They do not alter the sense of the works.

---

[1] Sādhu Aruṇachala (Major A. W. Chadwick).

PART ONE

Original Works

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A : PROSE

1

Self-Enquiry

Self-enquiry is the first work the Maharṣi ever wrote. It was written about 1901, that is when he was a young man of about twenty-two. He was already a *jñāni* or Sage in perfect realization of the Self, in the resplendent bliss of Divine Knowledge. At that time he was living in Virupākṣa cave on the hill of Aruṇachala. A number of disciples had already gathered round him. Although he had not actually taken a vow of silence, he seldom spoke, and so wrote his replies to certain questions put to him by Gambhiram Śeṣayya, one of the earliest devotees. The latter copied them in his diary. After his death this diary was obtained from his brother and the questions and answers were edited by Natanananda and published with Bhagavan's approval under the name of *Vichara Sangraham* or *Self-Enquiry*. Subsequently they were changed into the form of an essay. The original form has been adopted in the present work.

There is no youthfulness or immaturity in the work. The Master wrote with the authority of full spiritual knowledge, just as in his later years. Like all his expositions, verbal as well as written, this is concerned with practical questions of the path to realization of the Self, never with barren theory. However, it does differ from later expositions in one important respect : that is that it describes not only the path of Self-enquiry but others also, meditation on one's identity with the Self and a yogic path based on breath-control.

He himself prescribed only Self-enquiry or submission to the Guru. He would say: 'There are two ways: ask yourself "Who am I?" or submit.'

Why did he include the mention of less direct and more elaborate methods in this first exposition? The obvious contingent reason is that the disciple for whom it was written had been reading books about these various methods and asked questions about them. Perhaps also, in a wider sense, it is appropriate that there should first be a general exposition of various methods before the lifelong instruction in that which he prescribed. Certainly the other methods, although described, are scarcely recommended.

The breath-control that is described is, of course, no mere physical exercise. It is the spiritual significance of the exercise that makes it an elaborate science. 'Science' is, indeed, the right word for it, for it is a traditional Indian science of self-purification. This makes it abstruse for the Western reader who has no previous grounding in it, especially as, like all sciences, it has its technical vocabulary which does not permit of adequate translation without lengthy notes. One has to remember that in writing this exposition the Maharṣi knew that he could count on a technical knowledge of the science in question in the person for whom he wrote. The consolation for Western readers is to remember that he neither recommended nor prescribed this path and in his later works scarcely mentioned it. It is not necessary for them to learn its technicalities.

INVOCATION:

Is there any way of adoring the Supreme which is all, except by abiding firmly as That!

1

Disciple : Master ! What is the means to gain the state of eternal bliss, ever devoid of misery ?

Master : Apart from the statement in the *Veda* that wherever there is body there is misery, this is also the direct experience of all people ; therefore, one should enquire into one's true nature which is ever bodiless, and one should remain as such. This is the means to gaining that state.

2

D : What is meant by saying that one should enquire into one's true nature and understand it ?

M : Experiences such as " I went ; I came ; I was ; I did " come naturally to everyone. From these experiences, does it not appear that the consciousness " I " is the subject of those various acts ? Enquiring into the true nature of that consciousness, and remaining as oneself is the way to understand, through enquiry, one's true nature.

3

D : How is one to enquire : " Who am I ? "

M : Actions such as ' going ' and ' coming ' belong only to the body. And so, when one says " I went, I came ", it amounts to saying that the body is ' I '. But, can the body be said to be the consciousness ' I ', since the body was not before it was born, is made up of the five elements, is non-existent in the state of deep sleep, and becomes a corpse when dead ? Can this body which is inert like a log of wood be said to shine as ' I ' ' I ' ? Therefore, the ' I ' consciousness which at first arises in respect of the body is referred to variously as self-conceit (*taṛbodham*), egoity (*ahaṅkāra*), nescience (*avidyā*), *māyā*, impurity (*mala*), and individual soul (*jīva*). Can we remain without enquiring into this? Is it not for our redemption through enquiry that all the scriptures declare that the destruction of "self-conceit" is release (*mukti*)? Therefore, making the corpse-body remain as a corpse, and not even uttering the word 'I', one should enquire keenly thus: "Now, what is it that rises as 'I'?" Then, there would shine in the Heart a kind of wordless illumination of the form 'I' 'I'. That is, there would shine of its own accord the pure consciousness which is unlimited and one, the limited and the many thoughts having disappeared. If one remains quiescent without abandoning that (experience), the egoity, the individual sense, of the form 'I am the body' will be totally destroyed, and at the end the final thought, viz. the 'I'-form also will be quenched like the fire that burns camphor.[1] The great sages and scriptures declare that this alone is release.

4

D: When one enquires into the root of 'self-conceit' which is of the form 'I', all sorts of different thoughts without number seem to rise; and not any separate 'I' thought.

M: Whether the nominative case, which is the first case, appears or not, the sentences in which the other cases appear have as their basis the first case; similarly, all the thoughts that appear in the heart have as their basis the egoity which is the first mental mode 'I', the cognition of the form 'I am the body'; thus, it is the rise of egoity that is the cause and source of the rise of all other thoughts; therefore, if the self-conceit of the form of egoity which is the root of the illusory tree of *saṃsāra* is destroyed, all other thoughts will perish completely like an uprooted tree. Whatever thoughts arise as obstacles to one's *sādhana* — the mind should not be allowed to go in their direction, but should be made to rest in one's self which is the *Ātman*; one should remain as witness to whatever happens, adopting the attitude 'Let whatever strange thing happen, happen; let us see!' This should be one's practice. In other words, one should not identify oneself with appearances; one should never relinquish one's self. This is the proper means for destruction of the mind (*manonāśa*) which is of the nature of seeing the body as self, and which is the cause of all the aforesaid obstacles. This method which easily destroys egoity deserves to be called devotion (*bhakti*), meditation (*dhyāna*), concentration (*yoga*), and knowledge (*jñāna*). Because God remains of the nature of the Self, shining as 'I' in the heart, because the scriptures declare that thought itself is bondage, the best discipline is to stay quiescent without ever forgetting Him (God, the Self), after resolving in Him the mind which is of the form of the 'I'-thought, no matter by what means. This is the conclusive teaching of the Scriptures.

---

[1] *i.e.*, without leaving any sediment.

5

D: Is enquiry only the means for removal of the false belief of selfhood in the gross body, or is it also the means for removal of the false belief of selfhood in the subtle and causal bodies?

M: It is on the gross body that the other bodies subsist. In the false belief of the form "I am the body" are included all the three bodies consisting of the five sheaths. And destruction of the false belief of selfhood in the gross body is itself the destruction of the false belief of selfhood in the other bodies. So inquiry is the means to removal of the false belief of selfhood in all the three bodies.

6

D: While there are different modifications of the internal organ, viz. *manas* (reflection), *buddhi* (intellect), *chitta* (memory) and *ahaṅkāra* (egoity), how can it be said that the destruction of the mind alone is release?

M: In the books explaining the nature of the mind, it is thus stated: "The mind is formed by the concretion of the subtle portion of the food we eat; it grows with the passions such as attachment and aversion, desire and anger; being the aggregate of mind, intellect, memory and egoity, it receives the collective singular name 'mind'; the characteristics that it bears are thinking, determining, etc.; since it is an object of consciousness (the self), it is what is seen, inert; even though inert, it appears as if conscious because of association with consciousness (like a red-hot iron ball); it is limited, non-eternal, partite, and changing like wax, gold, candle, etc.; it is of the nature of all elements (of phenomenal existence); its locus is the heart-lotus, even as the loci of the sense of sight, etc., are the eyes, etc.; it is the adjunct of the individual soul; thinking of an object, it transforms itself into a mode, and along with the knowledge that is in the brain, it flows through the five sense-channels, gets joined to objects by the brain (that is associated with knowledge), and thus knows and experiences objects and gains satisfaction. That substance is the mind." Even as one and the same person is called by different names according to the different functions he performs, so also one and the same mind is called by the different names : mind, intellect, memory, and egoity, on account of the difference in the modes — and not because of any real difference. The mind itself is of the form of all, i.e. of soul, God and world ; when it becomes of the form of the Self through knowledge there is release, which is of the nature of *Brahman* : this is the teaching.

7

D : If these four — mind, intellect, memory and egoity — are one and the same why are separate locations mentioned for them ?

M : It is true that the throat is stated to be the location of the mind, the face or the heart of the intellect, the navel of the memory, and the heart or *sarvāṅga* of the egoity ; though differently stated thus yet, for the aggregate of these, that is the mind or internal organ, the location is the heart alone. This is conclusively declared in the Scriptures.

8

D : Why is it said that only the mind which is the internal organ, shines as of the form of all, that is of soul, God and world ?

M : As instruments for knowing the objects the sense organs are outside, and so they are called outer senses ; and the mind is called the inner sense because it is inside.

But the distinction between inner and outer is only with reference to the body; in truth, there is neither inner nor outer. The mind's nature is to remain pure like ether. What is referred to as the heart or the mind is the collocation of the elements (of phenomenal existence) that appear as inner and outer. So there is no doubt that all phenomena consisting of names and forms are of the nature of mind alone. All that appear outside are in reality inside and not outside; it is in order to teach this that in the Vedas also all have been described as of the nature of the Heart. What is called the heart is no other than *Brahman*.

9

D: How can it be said that the heart is no other than *Brahman*?

M: Although the self enjoys its experiences in the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep, residing respectively in the eyes, throat and heart, in reality, however, it never leaves its principal seat, the heart. In the heart-lotus which is of the nature of all, in other words in the mind-ether, the light of that self in the form 'I' shines. As it shines thus in everybody, this very self is referred to as the witness (*sākshī*) and the transcendent (*turīya* literally the fourth). The 'I'-less supreme *Brahman* which shines in all bodies as interior to the light in the form of 'I' is the Self-ether (or knowledge-ether): that alone is the absolute Reality. This is the super-transcendent (*turiyātīta*). Therefore, it is stated that what is called the heart is no other than *Brahman*. Moreover, for the reason that *Brahman* shines in the hearts of all souls as the Self, the name 'Heart' is given to *Brahman*.[2] The meaning of the word *hṛdayam*, when split thus '*hṛit-ayam*', is in fact *Brahman*. The adequate evidence for the fact that *Brahman*, which shines as the Self, resides in the hearts of all is that all people indicate themselves by pointing to the chest when saying 'I'.

10

D : If the entire universe is of the form of mind, then does it not follow that the universe is an illusion? If that be the case, why is the creation of the universe mentioned in the Veda?

M : There is no doubt whatsoever that the universe is the merest illusion. The principal purport of the Veda is to make known the true *Brahman*, after showing the apparent universe to be false. It is for this purpose that the Vedas admit the creation of the world and not for any other reason. Moreover, for the less qualified persons creation is taught, that is the staged evolution of *prakṛiti* (primal nature), *mahat-tattva* (the great intellect), *tanmātras* (the subtle essences), *bhūtas* (the gross elements), the world, the body, etc., from *Brahman* : while for the more qualified simultaneous creation is taught, that is, that this world arose like a dream on account of one's own thoughts induced by the defect of not knowing oneself as the Self. Thus, from the fact that the creation of the world has been described in different ways it is clear that the purport of the Vedas rests only in teaching the true nature of *Brahman* after showing somehow or other the illusory nature of the universe. That the world is illusory, every one can directly know in the state of realization which is in the form of experience of one's bliss-nature.

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[2] "In the hearts of all individual souls that which shines is *Brahman* and hence is called the Heart."—*Brahma-gita.*

11

D : Is Self-experience possible for the mind, whose nature is constant change?

M : Since *satva-guṇa* (the constituent of *prakṛiti* which makes for purity, intelligence, etc.) is the nature of mind, and since the mind is pure and undefiled like ether, what is called mind is, in truth, of the nature of knowledge. When it stays in that natural (i.e. pure) state, it has not even the name 'mind'. It is only the erroneous knowledge which mistakes one for another that is called mind. What was (originally) the pure *satva* mind, of the nature of pure knowledge, forgets its knowledge-nature on account of nescience, gets transformed into the world under the influence of *tamoguṇa* (i.e. the constituent of *prakṛiti* which makes for dullness, inertness, etc.), being under the influence of *rajo-guṇa* (i.e. the constituent of *prakṛiti* which makes for activity, passions, etc.), imagines "I am the body, etc.; the world is real", it acquires the consequent merit and demerit through attachment, aversion, etc., and, through the residual impressions (*vāsanās*) thereof, attains birth and death. But the mind, which has got rid of its defilement (sin) through action without attachment performed in many past lives, listens to the teaching of scripture from a true guru, reflects on its meaning, and meditates in order to gain the natural state of the mental mode of the form of the Self, i.e. of the form 'I am *Brahman*' which is the result of the continued contemplation of *Brahman*. Thus will be removed the mind's transformation into the world in the aspect of *tamo-guṇa*, and its roving therein in the aspect of *rajo-guṇa*. When this removal takes place the mind becomes subtle and unmoving. It is only by the mind that is impure and is under the influence of *rajas* and *tamas* that Reality (i.e. the Self) which is very subtle and unchanging cannot be experienced; just as a piece of fine silk cloth cannot be stitched with a heavy crow-bar, or as the details of subtle objects cannot be distinguished by the light of a lamp flame that flickers in the wind. But in the pure mind that has been rendered subtle and unmoving by the meditation described above, the Self-bliss (i.e. *Brahman*) will become manifest. As without mind there cannot be experience, it is possible for the purified mind endowed with the extremely subtle mode (*vṛitti*) to experience the Self-bliss, by remaining in that form (i.e. in the form of *Brahman*). Then, that one's self is of the nature of Brahman will be clearly experienced.

12

D: Is the aforesaid Self-experience possible, even in the state of empirical existence, for the mind which has to perform functions in accordance with its *prārabdha* (the past *karma* which has begun to fructify)?

M: A Brahmin may play various parts in a drama; yet the thought that he is a Brahmin does not leave his mind. Similarly, when one is engaged in various empirical acts there should be the firm conviction "I am the Self", without allowing the false idea "I am the body, etc." to rise. If the mind should stray away from its state, then immediately one should enquire, "Oh! Oh! We are not the body, etc.! Who are we?", and thus one should reinstate the mind in that (pure) state. The enquiry

"Who am I?" is the principal means to the removal of all misery and the attainment of the supreme bliss. When in this manner the mind becomes quiescent in its own state, Self-experience arises of its own accord, without any hindrance. Thereafter sensory pleasures and pains will not affect the mind. All (phenomena) will appear, then, without attachment, like a dream. Never forgetting one's plenary Self-experience is real *bhakti* (devotion), yoga (Mind-control), *jñāna* (knowledge) and all other austerities. Thus say the Sages.

13

D: When there is activity in regard to works, we are neither the agents of those works nor their enjoyers. The activity is of the three instruments (i.e., the mind, speech, and body). Could we remain (unattached) thinking thus?

M: After the mind has been made to stay in the Self which is its Deity, and has been rendered indifferent to empirical matters because it does not stray away from the Self, how can the mind think as mentioned above? Do not such thoughts constitute bondage? When such thoughts arise due to residual impressions (*vāsanās*), one should restrain the mind from flowing that way, endeavour to retain it in the Self-state, and make it turn indifferent to empirical matters. One should not give room in the mind for such thoughts as: "Is this good? Or, is that good? Can this be done? Or, can that be done?" One should be vigilant even before such thoughts arise and make the mind stay in its native state. If any little room is given, such a (disturbed) mind will do harm to us while posing as our friend; like the foe appearing to be a friend, it will topple us down. Is it not because one forgets one's Self that such thoughts arise and cause more and more evil? While it is true that to think through discrimination, "I do not do anything; all actions are performed by the instruments", is a means to prevent the mind from flowing along thought *vāsanās,* does it not follow that only if the mind flows along thought *vāsanās* that it must be restrained through discrimination as stated before? Can the mind that remains in the Self-state think as 'I' and as 'I behave empirically thus'? In all manner of ways possible one should endeavour gradually not to forget one's (true) Self that is God. If that is accomplished, all will be accomplished. The mind should not be directed to any other matter. Even though one may perform, like a mad person, the actions that are the result of *prārabdha-karma,* one should retain the mind, in the Self-state without letting the thought 'I do' arise. Have not countless *bhaktas* performed their numerous empirical functions with an attitude of indifference?

14

D : What is the real purpose of *sanyāsa* (renunciation)?

M : *Sanyāsa* is only the renunciation of the 'I' thought, and not the rejection of the external objects. He who has renounced (the 'I' thought) thus remains the same whether he is alone or in the midst of the extensive *saṃsāra.* Just as when the mind is concentrated on some object, it does not observe other things even though they may be proximate, so also, although the sage may perform any number of empirical acts, in reality he performs nothing, because he makes the mind rest in the Self without letting the 'I' thought arise. Even as in a dream one appears to fall head downwards, while in reality one is unmoving, so also the ignorant person, i.e., the person for whom the 'I' thought has not ceased, although he remains alone in constant meditation, is in fact one who performs all empirical actions.[3] Thus the wise ones have said.

15

D : The mind, sense-organs, etc., have the ability to perceive ; yet why are they regarded as perceived objects ?

M :

	Dṛik *(Knower)*	*Dṛisya* *(Known object)*
(1)	The seer	Pot (i.e. the seen object)
	Further,	
(2)	The eye organ	Body, pot, etc.
(3)	The sense of sight	The eye-organ
(4)	The mind	The sense of sight
(5)	The individual soul	The mind
(6)	Consciousness (the Self)	The individual soul

As shown in the above scheme, since we, the consciousness, know all objects, we are said to be *dṛik* (knower). The categories ending with pot are the objects seen, since they are what are known. In the table of 'knowledge : ignorance (i.e. knower-known)' given above, among the knowers and objects of knowledge, it is seen that one is knower in relation to another ; yet, since that one is object in relation to another, none of those categories is, in reality, the knower. Although we are said to be the 'knower' because we know all, and not the 'known' because we are not known by anything else, we are said to be the 'knower' only in relation to the known objects. In truth, however, what is called the 'known' is not apart from us. And so we are the Reality that transcends those two (the knower and the known). All the others fall within the knower-known categories.

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[3] Like those who listen to a story with their attention fixed elsewhere, the mind whose residual impressions have worn away does not really function, even if it appears to do so. The mind that is not free from residual impressions really functions even if it does not appear to do so ; this is like those who while remaining stationary imagine in their dreams that they climb up a hill and fall therefrom.

16

D : How do egoity, soul, self, and *Brahman* come to be identified?

M :

	The Example	*The Exemplified*
(1)	The iron-ball	Egoity
(2)	The heated iron-ball	The soul which appears as a superimposition on the Self
(3)	The fire that is in the heated iron-ball	The light of consciousness, i.e. the immutable *Brahman*, which shines in the soul in every body
(4)	The flame of fire which remains as one	The all-pervading Brahman which remains as one

From the example given above, it will be clear how egoity, soul, witness, and All-witness come to be identified.

Just as in the wax-lump that is with the smith numerous and varied metal-particles lie included and all of them appear to be one wax-lump, so also in deep sleep the gross and subtle bodies of all the individual souls are included in the cosmic *māyā* which is nescience, of the nature of sheer darkness, and since the souls are resolved in the Self becoming one with it, they see everywhere darkness alone. From the darkness of sleep, the subtle body, viz. egoity, and from that (egoity) the gross body arise respectively. Even as the egoity arises, it appears superimposed on the nature of the Self, like the heated iron-ball. Thus, without the soul (*jīva*) which is the mind or egoity that is conjoined with the Consciousness-light, there is no witness of the soul, viz. the Self, and without the Self there is no *Brahman* that is the All-witness. Just as when the iron ball is beaten into various shapes by the smith, the fire that is in it does not change thereby in any manner, even so the soul may be involved in ever so many experiences and undergo pleasures and pains, and yet the Self-light that is in it does not change in the least thereby, and like the ether it is the all-pervasive pure knowledge that is one, and it shines in the heart as *Brahman*.

17

D: How is one to know that in the heart the Self itself shines as *Brahman*?

M: Just as the elemental ether within the flame of a lamp is known to fill without any difference and without any limit both the inside and the outside of the flame, so also the knowledge-ether that is within the Self-light in the heart fills without any difference and without any limit both the inside and the outside of that Self-light. That is what is referred to as *Brahman*.

18

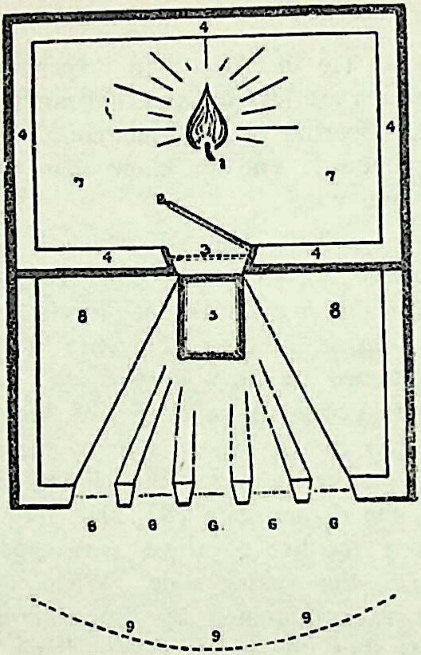
D : How do the three states of experience, the three bodies, etc., which are imaginations, appear in the Self-light which is one, impartite and self-luminous? Even if they should appear, how is one to know that the Self alone remains ever unmoving?

M : (See page 20) The Self which is the lamp (1) shines of its own accord in the inner chamber, i.e., the causal body (7) that is endowed with nescience as the inner wall (4) and sleep as the door (2); when by the vital principle as conditioned by time, *karma*, etc., the sleep-door is opened, there occurs a reflection of the Self in the egoity-mirror (5) that is placed next to the door-step — *Mahat-tattva*; the egoity-mirror thus illumines the middle chamber, i.e., the dream state (8), and, through the windows which are the five cognitive sense-organs (6), the outer court, i.e., the waking state. When, again, by the vital principle as conditioned by time, *karma*, etc., the sleep-door gets shut, the egoity ceases along with waking and dream, and the Self alone ever shines. The example just given explains how the Self is unmoving, how there is difference between the Self and the egoity and how the three states of experience, the three bodies, etc., appear.

19

D : Although I have listened to the explanation of the characteristics of enquiry in such great detail, my mind has not gained even a little of peace. What is the reason for this?

M : The reason is the absence of strength or one-pointedness of the mind.



The Example	*The Exemplified*
(1) The lamp	The Self.
(2) The door	Sleep.
(3) The door-step	Mahat-tattva.
(4) The inner wall	Nescience or the causal body.
(5) The mirror	The egoity.
(6) The windows	The five cognitive sense-organs.
(7) The inner chamber	Deep sleep in which the causal body is manifest.
(8) The middle chamber	Dream in which the subtle body is manifest.
(9) The outer court	Waking state in which the gross body is manifest.

20

D : What is the reason for the absence of mental strength ?

M : The means that make one qualified for enquiry are meditation, *yoga*, etc. One should gain proficiency in these through graded practice, and thus secure a stream of mental modes that is natural and helpful. When the mind that has in this manner become ripe listens to the present enquiry, it will at once realize its true nature which is the Self, and remain in perfect peace, without deviating from that state. To a mind which has not become ripe, immediate realization and peace are hard to gain through listening to enquiry. Yet, if one practises the means for mind-control for some time, peace of mind can be obtained eventually.

21

D : Of the means for mind-control, which is the most important ?

M : Breath-control is the means for mind-control.

22

D : How is breath to be controlled ?

M : Breath can be controlled either by absolute retention of breath (*kevala-kuṁbhaka*) or by regulation of breath (*prāṇāyāma*).

23

D : What is absolute retention of breath ?

M : It is making the vital air stay firmly in the heart even without exhalation and inhalation. This is achieved through meditation on the vital principle, etc.

24

D : What is regulation of breath?

M : It is making the vital air stay firmly in the heart through exhalation, inhalation, and retention, according to the instructions given in the *yoga* texts.

25

D : How is breath-control the means for mind-control?

M : There is no doubt that breath-control is the means for mind-control, because the mind, like breath, is a part of air, because, the nature of mobility is common to both, because the place of origin is the same for both, and because when one of them is controlled the other gets controlled.

26

D : Since breath-control leads only to quiescence of the mind (*manolaya*) and not to its destruction (*manonāśa*), how can it be said that breath-control is the means for enquiry which aims at the destruction of mind?

M : The scriptures teach the means for gaining Self-realization in two modes — as the *yoga* with eight limbs (*ashṭāṅga-yoga*) and as knowledge with eight limbs (*ashṭāṅga-jñāna*). By regulation of breath (*prāṇāyāma*) or by absolute retention thereof (*kevala-kumbhaka*), which is one of the limbs of *yoga*, the mind gets controlled. Without leaving the mind at that, if one practises the further discipline such as withdrawal of the mind from external objects (*pratyāhāra*), then at the end, Self-realization which is the fruit of enquiry will surely be gained.

27

D : What are the limbs of *yoga*?

M : *Yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna*, and *samādhi*. Of these —

(1) *Yama* :—this stands for the cultivation of such principles of good conduct as non-violence (*ahiṁsā*), truth (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), celibacy (*brahmacharya*), and non-possession (*aparigraha*).

(2) *Niyama* :—this stands for the observance of such rules of good conduct as purity (*śaucha*), contentment (*santosha*), austerity (*tapas*), study of the sacred texts (*svādhyāya*), and devotion to God (*Īśvara-praṇidhāna*)[4]

(3) *Āsana* :—Of the different postures, eightyfour are the main ones. Of these, again, four, viz., *siṁha, bhadra, padma*, and *siddha*, are said to be excellent. Of these too, it is only *siddha*[5] that is the most excellent. Thus the yoga-texts declare.

(4) *Prāṇāyāma* :—According to the measures prescribed in the sacred texts, exhaling the vital air is *rechaka*, inhaling is *pūraka* and retaining it in the heart is *kuṁbhaka*. As regards ' measure ', some texts say that *rechaka* and *pūraka* should be equal in measure, and *kuṁbhaka* twice that measure, while other texts say that if *rechaka* is one measure, *pūraka* should be of two measures, and *kuṁbhaka* of four.

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[4] The aim of *yama* and *niyama* is the attainment of all good paths open to those eligible for *moksha*. For more details see works like the *Yoga-sutra and Hathayoga-dipika*.

[5] *Siddhasana* : Left heel should be placed over the genital organ and over that, the right heel. Fixing one's gaze between the eyebrows one's body should be motionless and erect like a stick.

By ' measure ' what is meant is the time that would be taken for the utterance of the *Gāyatrīmantra* once. Thus *prāṇāyāma* consisting of *rechaka*, *pūraka*, and *Kuṁbhaka* should be practised daily according to ability, slowly and gradually. Then, there would arise for the mind a desire to rest in happiness without moving. After this, one should practise *pratyāhāra.*

(5) *Pratyāhāra* :—This is regulating the mind by preventing it from flowing towards the external names and forms. The mind, which had been till then distracted, now becomes controlled. The aids in this respect are (1) meditation on the *praṇava*, (2) fixing the attention betwixt the eye-brows, (3) looking at the tip of the nose, and (4) reflection on the *nāda*. The mind that has thus become one-pointed will be fit to stay in one place. After this, *dhāraṇā* should be be practised.

(6) *Dhāraṇā* :—This is fixing the mind in a locus which is fit for meditation. The loci that are eminently fit for meditation are the heart and *Brahma-randhra* (aperture in the crown of the head). One should think that in the middle of the eight-petalled lotus[6] that is at this place there shines, like a flame, the deity which is the Self, i.e. *Brahman*, and fix the mind therein. After this, one should meditate.

(7) *Dhyāna* :—This is meditation, through the ' I am He, thought, that one is not different from the nature of the aforesaid flame. Even, thus, if one makes the enquiry ' Who am I ? ', then, as the Scripture declares, ' The *Brahman* which is everywhere shines in the heart as the Self

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[6] Although it is true that the lotus in the crown of the head is said to have a thousand petals, it also may be described as having eight petals because each of these eight consists of 125 sub-petals.

that is the witness of the intellect' and one would realize that it is the Divine Self that shines in the ḥeart as 'I—I'. This mode of reflection is the best meditation.

(8) *Samādhi* :—As a result of the fruition of the aforesaid meditation, the mind gets resolved in the object of meditation without harbouring the ideas 'I am such and such ; I am doing this and this'. This subtle state in which even the thought 'I—I' disappears is *samādhi*. If one practises this every day, seeing to it that sleep does not supervene, God will soon confer on one the supreme state of quiescence of mind.

28

D : What is the purport of the teaching that in *pratyāhāra* one should medidate on the *praṇava* ?

M : The purport of prescribing meditation on the *praṇava* is this. The *praṇava* is *Oṁkāra* consisting of three and a half *mātrās*, viz., *a*, *u*, *m*, and *ardha-mātrā*. Of these, *a* stands for the waking state, *Viśva-jīva*, and the gross body ; *u* stands for the dream-state *Taijasa-jīva*, and the subtle body ; *m* stands for the sleep-state, *Prājña-jīva* and the causal body ; the *ardha-mātrā* represents the *Turīya* which is the self or 'I'-nature ; and what is beyond that is the state of *Turiyātīta*, or pure Bliss. The fourth state which is the state of 'I'-nature was referred to in the section on meditation (*dhyāna*) : this has been variously described—as of the nature of *amātrā* which includes the three *mātrās*, *a*, *u*, and *m*, as *maunākshara* (silence-syllable) ; as *ajapā* (as muttering without muttering) and as the *Advaita-mantra* which is the essence of all mantras such as *pañchākshara*. In order to get at this true significance, one should meditate on the *praṇava*. This is meditation which is of the nature of devotion consisting in reflection on the truth of the Self. The fruition of this process is *samādhi* which yields release which is the state of unexcellable bliss. The revered Gurus also have said that release is to be gained only by devotion which is of the nature of reflection on the truth of the Self.

29

D : What is the purport of the teaching that one should meditate, through the 'I am He' thought, on the truth that one is not different from the self-luminous Reality that shines like a flame?

M : (A) The purport of teaching that one should cultivate the idea that one is not different from the self-luminous Reality is this : Scripture defines meditation in these words, 'In the middle of the eight-petalled *heart-lotus* which is of the nature of all, and which is referred to as *Kailāsa*, *Vaikuṇṭha*, and *Parama-pada*, there is the Reality which is of the size of the thumb, which is dazzling like lightning and which shines like a flame. By meditating on it, a person gains immortality'. From this we should know that by such meditation one avoids the defects of (1) the thought of difference, of the form 'I am different, and that is different', (2) the meditation on what is limited, (3) the idea that the Real is limited, and (4) that it is confined to one place.

(B) The purport of teaching that one should meditate on the 'I am He' thought is this : *saḥ aham* : *sōham* ; *saḥ* the supreme Self, *aham* the Self that is manifest as 'I'. The *jīva* which is the *Śiva-liṅga* resides in the heart-lotus which is its seat situated in the body which is the city of *Brahman*; the mind which is of the nature of egoity, goes outward identifying itself with the body, etc. Now, the mind should be resolved in the heart, i.e. the I-sense that is placed in the body, etc., should be got rid of; when thus one enquires 'Who am I?', remaining undisturbed, in that state the Self-nature becomes manifest in a subtle manner as 'I-I'; that Self-nature is all and yet none, and is manifest as the supreme Self everywhere without the distinction of inner and outer; that shines like a flame, as was stated above, signifying the truth 'I am Brahman'. If, without meditating on that as being identical with oneself, one imagines it to be different, ignorance will not leave. Hence, the identity-meditation is prescribed.

If one meditates for a long time, without disturbance, on the Self ceaselessly, with the 'I am He' thought which is the technique of reflection on the Self, the darkness of ignorance which is in the heart and all the impediments which are but the effects of ignorance will be removed, and the plenary wisdom will be gained.[7]

Thus, realizing the Reality in the heart-cave which is in the city (of *Brahman*), viz. the body, is the same as realizing the all-perfect God.

In the city with nine gates, which is the body, the wise one resides at ease.[8]

The body is the temple; the *jīva* is God (Śiva). If one worships Him with the 'I am He' thought, one will gain release.

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[7] If meditation in the form 'I am Siva' (*Sivoham bhavana*) which prevents the thought going outwards is practised always, *samadhi* will come about.—Vallalar.

[8] In the city that has nine false gates, He resides in the form of bliss.—*Bhagavad Gita*.

The body which consists of the five sheaths is the cave, the supreme that resides there is the lord of the cave. Thus the scriptures declare.

Since the Self is the reality of all the gods, the meditation on the Self which is oneself is the greatest of all meditations. All other meditations are included in this. It is for gaining this that the other meditations are prescribed. So, if this is gained, the others are not necessary. Knowing one's Self is knowing God. Without knowing one's Self that meditates, imagining that there is a deity which is different and meditating on it, is compared by the great ones to the act of measuring with one's foot one's own shadow, and to the search for a trivial conch after throwing away a priceless gem that is already in one's possession.[9]

30

D: Even though the heart and the *Brahmarandhra* alone are the loci fit for meditation, could one meditate, if necessary, on the six mystic centres (*ādhāras*)?

M: The six mystic centres, etc., which are said to be loci of meditation, are but products of imagination. All these are meant for beginners in *yoga*. With reference to meditation on the six centres, the Siva-yogins say, "God, who is of the nature of the non-dual, plenary, consciousness-self, manifests, sustains and resolves us all. It is a great sin to spoil that Reality by superimposing on it various names and forms such as Ganapati, Brahmā, Vishṇu, Rudra,

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[9] We shall meditate on that which, existing in the form of self, is the atma-tattva, is effulgent, and which residing in all living things always says 'I', 'I'. To seek for a God outside, leaving the God residing in the cave of the heart, is like throwing away a priceless gem and searching for a trivial bead.

Maheśvara, and Sadāśiva", and the Vedāntins declare, "All those are but imaginations of the mind." Therefore, if one knows one's Self which is of the nature of consciousness that knows everything, one knows everything. The great ones have also said: "When that One is known as it is in Itself, all that has not been known becomes known". If we who are endowed with various thoughts meditate on God that is the Self we would get rid of the plurality of thoughts by that one thought; and then even that one thought would vanish. This is what is meant by saying that knowing one's Self is knowing God. This knowledge is release.

31

D: How is one to think of the Self?

M: The Self is self-luminous without darkness and light, and is the reality which is self-manifest. Therefore, one should not think of it as this or as that. The very thought of thinking will end in bondage. The purport of meditation on the Self is to make the mind take the form of the Self. In the middle of the heart-cave the pure *Brahman* is directly manifest as the Self in the form 'I-I'. Can there be greater ignorance than to think of it in manifold ways, without knowing it as aforementioned?

32

D: It was stated that *Brahman* is manifest as the self in the form 'I-I', in the heart. To facilitate an understanding of this statement, can it be still further explained?

M: Is it not within the experience of all that during deep sleep, swoon, etc., there is no knowledge whatsoever, i.e. netiher self-knowledge nor other-knowledge? Afterwards, when there is experience of the form "I have woken up from sleep" or "I have recovered from swoon" — is that not a mode of specific knowledge that has arisen from the aforementioned distinctionless state? This specific knowledge is called *vijñāna*. This *vijñāna* becomes manifest only as pertaining to either the self or the not-self, and not by itself. When it pertains to the self, it is called true knowledge, knowledge in the form of that mental mode whose object is the self, or knowledge which has for its content the impartite (Self); and when it relates to the not-self, it is called ignorance. The state of this *vijñāna*, when it pertains to the self and is manifest as the form of the self, is said to be the 'I'-manifestation. This manifestation cannot take place as apart from the Real (i.e. the Self). It is this manifestation that serves as the mark for the direct experience of the Real. Yet, this by itself cannot constitute the state of being the Real. That, depending on which this manifestation takes place, is the basic Reality which is also called *prajñāna*. The Vedāntic text "*prajñānam brahma*" teaches the same truth.

Know this as the purport of the scripture also. The Self which is self-luminous and the witness of everything manifests itself as residing in the *vijñānakośa*. By the mental mode which is impartite, seize this Self as your goal and enjoy it as the self.

33

D: What is that which is called the inner worship or worship of the attributeless?

M: In texts such as the *Ribhu-gītā*, the worship of the attributeless has been elaborately explained (as a separate discipline). Yet, all disciplines such as sacrifice, charity, austerity, observance of vows, *japa*, *yoga*, and *pūjā*, are, in effect, modes of meditation of the form 'I am *Brahman*'. So, in all the modes of discipline, one should see to it that one does not stray away from the thought 'I am *Brahman*'. This is the purport of the worship of the attributeless.

34

D : What are the eight limbs of knowledge (*jñāna-ashṭānga*)?

M : The eight limbs are those which have been already mentioned, viz. *yama*, *niyama*, etc. but differently defined. Of these —

(1) *Yama* :—This is controlling the aggregate of sense-organs, realizing the defects that are present in the world consisting of the body, etc.

(2) *Niyama* :—This is maintaining a stream of mental modes that relate to the Self and rejecting the contrary modes. In other words, it means love that arises uninterruptedly for the supreme Self.

(3) *Āsana* :—That with the help of which constant meditation on *Brahman* is made possible with ease is *āsana*.

(4) *Prāṇāyāma* :—*Rechaka* (exhalation) is removing the two unreal aspects of name and form from the objects constituting the world, the body etc., *pūraka* (inhalation) is grasping the three real aspects, existence, consciousness and bliss, which are constant in those objects, and *kumbhaka* is retaining those aspects thus grasped.

(5) *Pratyāhāra* :—This is preventing name and form which have been removed from re-entering the mind.

(6) *Dhāraṇā* :—This is making the mind stay in the heart, without straying outward, and realizing that one is the Self itself which is existence-consciousness-bliss.

(7) *Dhyāna* :—This is meditation of the form 'I am only pure consciousness'. That is, after leaving aside the body which consists of five sheaths, one enquires 'Who am I?', and as a result of that, one stays as 'I' which shines as the Self.

(8) *Samādhi* :—When the 'I'-manifestation also ceases, there is (subtle) direct experience. This is samādhi.

For the *prāṇāyāma*, etc., detailed here, the disciplines such as *āsana*, etc., mentioned in connection with *yoga*, are not necessary. The limbs of knowledge may be practised at all places and at all times. Of *yoga* and knowledge, one may follow whichever is pleasing to one, or both, according to circumstances. The great teachers say that forgetfulness is the root of all evil, and is death for those who seek release;[10] so one should rest the mind in one's self and should never forget the Self: this is the aim. If the mind is controlled, all else can be controlled. The distinction between *yoga* with eight limbs and knowledge with eight limbs has been set forth elaborately in the sacred texts; so only the substance of this teaching has been given here.

35

D: Is it possible to practise at the same time the *prāṇāyāma* belonging to the *yoga* and the *prāṇāyāma* pertaining to knowledge?

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[10] Death or *Kāla* is the giving up on this earth of the contemplation of the Self which should never be given up even the least bit.
—*Vivekachudamani*.

M : So long as the mind has not been made to rest in the heart, either through absolute retention (*kevala-kuṁbhaka*) or through enquiry, *rechaka*, *pūraka*, etc., are needed. Hence, the *prāṇāyāma* of *yoga* is to be practised during training, and the other *prāṇāyāma* may be practised always. Thus, both may be practised. It is enough if the yogic *prāṇāyāma* is practised till skill is gained in absolute retention.

36

D : Why should the path to release be differently taught? Will it not create confusion in the minds of aspirants?

M : Several paths are taught in the Vedas to suit the different grades of qualified aspirants. Yet, since release is but the destruction of mind, all efforts have for their aim the control of mind. Although the modes of meditation may appear to be different from one another, in the end all of them become one. There is no need to doubt this. One may adopt that path which suits the maturity of one's mind.

The control of *prāṇa* which is *yoga*, and the control of mind which is *jñāna*[11] — these are the two principal means for the destruction of the mind. To some, the former may appear easy, and to others the latter. Yet, *jñāna* is like subduing a turbulent bull by coaxing it with green grass, while *yoga* is like controlling through the use of force. Thus the wise ones say: of the three grades of qualified aspirants, the highest reach the goal by making the mind firm in the Self through determining the nature of the Real by Vedāntic enquiry and by looking upon one's self and all things as of the nature of the Real; the mediocre, by making the mind stay in the heart through *kevala-kuṁbhaka* and meditating for a long time on the Real; and the lowest grade, by gaining that state in a gradual manner through breath-control, etc.

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[11] Seeing everything as Real according to the Scripture: I am *Brahman*—one only without a second.

The mind should be made to rest in the heart till the destruction of the 'I'-thought which is of the form of ignorance, residing in the heart. This itself is *jñāna*; this alone is *dhyāna* also. The rest are a mere digression of words, digression of the texts. Thus the scriptures proclaim. Therefore, if one gains the skill of retaining the mind in one's Self through some means or other, one need not worry about other matters.

The great teachers also have taught that the devotee is greater than the *yogins*,[12] and that the means to release is devotion, which is of the nature of reflection on one's own Self.[13]

Thus, it is the path of realizing *Brahman* that is variously called *Dahara-vidyā*, *Brahma-vidyā*, *Ātma-vidyā*, etc. What more can be said than this? One should understand the rest by inference.

The Scriptures teach in different modes. After analysing all these modes the great ones declare this to be the shortest and the best means.

D: By practising the disciplines taught above, one may get rid of the obstacles that are in the mind, viz. ignorance, doubt, error, etc., and thereby attain quiescence of mind. Yet, there is one last doubt. After the mind has been resolved in the heart, there is only consciousness shining as the plenary reality. When thus the mind has assumed the form of the Self, who is there to enquire? Such enquiry would result in Self-worship. It would be like the story of the shepherd searching for the sheep that was all the time on his shoulders!

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[12] Of all *Yogins*, only he who rests his unwavering mind and love in Me is dear to Me.—*Bhagavadgita*.

[13] Of the means to release only *bhakti* (devotion) may be said to be the highest. For, *bhakti* is constant reflection on one's own Self.—*Vivekachudamani*.

M: The *jīva* itself is Śiva; Śiva Himself is the *jīva*. It is true that the *jīva* is no other than Śiva. When the grain is hidden inside the husk, it is called paddy; when it is de-husked, it is called rice. Similarly, so long as one is bound by *karma* one remains a *jīva*; when the bond of ignorance is broken, one shines as Śiva, the Deity. Thus declares a scriptural text. Accordingly, the *jīva* which is mind is in reality the pure Self; but, forgetting this truth, it imagines itself to be an individual soul and gets bound in the shape of mind. So its search for the Self, which is itself, is like the search for the sheep by the shepherd. But still, the *jīva* which has forgotten its self will not become the Self through mere mediate knowledge. By the impediment caused by the residual impressions gathered in previous births, the *jīva* forgets again and again its identity with the Self, and gets deceived, identifying itself with the body, etc. Will a person become a high officer by merely looking at him? Is it not by steady effort in that direction that he could become a highly placed officer? Similarly, the *jīva*, which is in bondage through mental identification with the body, etc., should put forth effort in the form of reflection on the Self, in a gradual and sustained manner; and when thus the mind gets destroyed, the *jīva* would become the Self.[14]

The reflection on the Self which is thus practised constantly will destroy the mind, and thereafter will destroy itself like the stick that is used to kindle the cinders burning a corpse. It is this state that is called release.

38

D: If the *jīva* is by nature identical with the Self, what is it that prevents the *jīva* from realising its true nature?

M: It is forgetfulness of the *jīva's* true nature; this is known as the power of veiling.

39

D: If it is true that the *jīva* has forgotten itself, how does the 'I'-experience arise for all?

M: The veil does not completely hide the *jīva*;[15] it only hides the Self-nature of 'I' and projects the 'I am the body' notion; but it does not hide the Self's existence which is 'I', and which is real and eternal.

40

D: What are the characteristics of the *jīvan-mukta* (the liberated in life) and the *videha-mukta* (the liberated at death)?

M: 'I am not the body; I am *Brahman* which is manifest as the self. In me who am the plenary Reality,[16] the world consisting of bodies etc., are mere appearance, like the blue of the sky'. He who has realized the truth thus is a *jīvan-mukta*. Yet, so long as his mind has not been resolved, there may arise some misery for him because of relation to objects on account of *prārabdha* (*karma* which has begun to fructify and whose result is the present body), and as the movement of mind has not ceased there will not be also the experience of bliss. The experience of Self is possible only for the mind that has become subtle and unmoving as a result of prolonged meditation. He who is thus endowed with a mind that has become subtle, and who has the experience of the Self is called a *jīvan-mukta*. It is the state of *jīvan-mukti* that is referred to as the attributeless *Brahman* and as the *Turīya*. When even the subtle mind gets resolved, and experience of self ceases, and when one is immersed in the ocean of bliss and has become one with it without any differentiated existence, one is called a *videha-mukta*. It is the state of *videha-mukti* that is referred to as the transcendent attributeless *Brahman* and as the transcendent *Turīya*. This is the final goal. Because of the grades in misery and happiness, the released ones, the *jīvan-muktas* and *videha-muktas*, may be spoken of as belonging to four categories—*Brahmavid*,—*vara*,—*varīyān*, and *varishṭha*. But these distinctions are from the standpoint of the others who look at them; in reality, however, there are no distinctions in release gained through *jñāna*.

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[14] Though the obstacles which cause the bondage of birth may be many, the root-cause for all such changes is *ahankara*. This root-cause must be destroyed for ever.—*Vivekachudamani.*

[15] Ignorance cannot hide the basic 'I', but it hides the specific truth that the *jiva* is the Supreme (Self).

[16] If there is prolonged meditation that the worlds are an appearance in me who am the plenary Reality, where can ignorance stand?

OBEISANCE

May the Feet of Ramana, the Master, who is the great Śiva Himself and is also in human form, flourish for ever!

2

Who am I?

'Who Am I?' was written at the same period as 'Self-Enquiry'. It began as answers to certain questions asked by Sivaprakasam Pillai, one of the early devotees. The latter arranged and elaborated the questions and answers and submitted them for Bhagavan's approval. They were then published in the form of questions and answers but was later changed into the form of a connected exposition. The original work has been adopted in the present edition.

* * * *

As all living beings desire to be happy always, without misery, as in the case of every one there is observed supreme love for one's self, and as happiness alone is the cause for love, in order to gain that happiness which is one's nature and which is experienced in the state of deep sleep where there is no mind, one should know one's self. For that, the path of knowledge, the inquiry of the form 'Who am I?' *is the principal means.*

1. *Who am I?*

The gross body which is composed of the seven humours (*dhātus*), I am not; the five cognitive sense-organs, viz. the senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell, which apprehend their respective objects, viz. sound, touch, colour, taste, and odour, I am not; the five conative sense-organs, viz. the organs of speech, locomotion, grasping, excretion, and procreation, which have as their respective functions speaking, moving, grasping, excreting, and enjoying, I am not; the five vital airs, *prāṇa*, etc., which perform respectively the five functions of in-breathing, etc., I am not; even the mind which thinks, I am not; the nescience too, which is endowed only with the residual impressions of objects, and in which there are no objects and no functionings, I am not.

2. *If I am none of these, then who am I*?

After negating all of the above-mentioned as 'not this' ('not this') that Awareness which alone remains—that I am.

3. *What is the nature of Awareness*?

The nature of Awareness is existence-conscicusness-bliss.

4. *When will the realization of the Self be gained*?

When the world which is what-is-seen has been removed, there will be realization of the Self which is the seer.

5. *Will there not be realization of the Self even while the world is there* (*taken as real*)?

There will not be.

6. *Why*?

The seer and the object seen are like the rope and the snake. Just as the knowledge of the rope which is the substrate will not arise unless the fase knowledge of the illusory serpent goes, so the realization of the Self which is the substrate will not be gained unless the belief that the world is real is removed.

7. *When will the world which is the object seen be removed?*

When the mind, which is the cause of all cognitions and of all actions, becomes quiescent, the world will disappear.

8. *What is the nature of the mind?*

What is called 'mind' is a wondrous power residing in the Self. It causes all thoughts to arise. Apart from thoughts, there is no such thing as mind. Therefore, thought is the nature of mind. Apart from thoughts, there is no independent entity called the world. In deep sleep there are no thoughts, and there is no world. In the states of waking and dream, there are thoughts, and there is a world also. Just as the spider emits the thread (of the web) out of itself and again withdraws it into itself, likewise the mind projects the world out of itself and again resolves it into itself. When the mind comes out of the Self, the world appears. Therefore, when the world appears (to be real), the Self does not appear; and when the Self appears (shines) the world does not appear. When one persistently inquires into the nature of the mind, the mind will end leaving the Self (as the residue). What is referred to as the Self is the *Ātman*. The mind always exists only in dependence on something gross; it cannot stay alone. It is the mind that is called the subtle body or the soul (*jīva*).

9. *What is the path of inquiry for understanding the nature of the mind?*

That which rises as 'I' in this body is the mind. If one inquires as to where in the body the thought 'I' rises first, one would discover that it rises in the heart. That is the place of the mind's origin. Even if one thinks constantly

'I' 'I', one will be led to that place. Of all the thoughts that arise in the mind, the 'I' thought is the first. It is only after the rise of this that the other thoughts arise. It is after the appearance of the first personal pronoun that the second and third personal pronouns appear; without the first personal pronoun there will not be the second and third.

10. *How will the mind become quiescent?*

By the inquiry 'Who am I?'. The thought 'who am I?' will destroy all other thoughts, and, like the stick used for stirring the burning pyre, it will itself in the end get destroyed. Then, there will arise Self-realization.

11. *What is the means for constantly holding on to the thought 'Who am I?'*

When other thoughts arise, one should not pursue them, but should inquire: 'To whom did they arise?' It does not matter how many thoughts arise. As each thought arises, one should inquire with diligence, 'To whom has this thought arisen?' The answer that would emerge would be 'To me'. Thereupon if one inquires 'Who am I?', the mind will go back to its source; and the thought that arose will become quiescent. With repeated practice in this manner, the mind will develop the skill to stay in its source. When the mind that is subtle goes out through the brain and the sense-organs, the gross names and forms appear; when it stays in the heart, the names and forms disappear. Not letting the mind go out but retaining it in the Heart is what is called 'inwardness (*antar-mukha*), Letting the mind to go out of the Heart is known as 'externalization' (*bahir-mukha*). Thus, when the mind stays in the Heart, the 'I' which is the source of all thoughts will go, and the Self which ever exists will shine. Whatever one does, one should do without the egoity 'I'. If one acts in that way, all will appear as of the nature of *Śiva* (God).

12. *Are there no other means for making the mind quiescent?*

Other than inquiry, there are no adequate means. If through other means it is sought to control the mind, the mind will appear to be controlled, but will again go forth. Through the control of breath also, the mind will become quiescent; but it will be quiescent only so long as the breath remains controlled, and when the breath resumes the mind also will again start moving and will wander as impelled by residual impressions. The source is the same for both mind and breath. Thought, indeed, is the nature of the mind. The thought 'I' is the first thought of the mind; and that is egoity. It is from that whence egoity originates that breath also originates. Therefore, when the mind becomes quiescent, the breath is controlled, and when the breath is controlled the mind becomes quiescent. But in deep sleep, although the mind becomes quiescent, the breath does not stop. This is because of the will of God, so that the body may be preserved and other people may not be under the impression that it is dead. In the state of waking and in *samādhi*, when the mind becomes quiescent the breath is controlled. Breath is the gross form of mind. Till the time of death, the mind keeps breath in the body; and when the body dies the mind takes the breath along with it. Therefore, the exercise of breath-control is only an aid for rendering the mind quiescent (*manonigraha*); it will not destroy the mind (*manonāśa*).

Like the practice of breath-control, meditation on the forms of God, repetition of mantras, restriction on food, etc., are but aids for rendering the mind quiescent.

Through meditation on the forms of God and through repetition of mantras, the mind becomes one-pointed. The mind will always be wandering. Just as when a chain is given to an elephant to hold in its trunk it will go along grasping the chain and nothing else, so also when the mind is occupied with a name or form it will grasp that alone. When the mind expands in the form of countless thoughts, each thought becomes weak; but as thoughts get resolved the mind becomes one-pointed and strong; for such a mind Self-inquiry will become easy. Of all the restrictive rules, that relating to the taking of *sātvic* food in moderate quantities is the best; by observing this rule, the *sātvic* quality of mind will increase, and that will be helpful to Self-inquiry.

13. *The residual impressions (thoughts) of objects appear unending like the waves of an ocean. When will all of them be removed?*

As the meditation on the Self rises higher and higher, the thoughts will get destroyed.

14. *Is it possible for the residual impressions of objects that come from beginningless time, as it were, to be resolved, and for one to remain as the pure Self?*

Without yielding to the doubt "Is it possible, or not?", one should persistently hold on to the meditation on the Self. Even if one be a great sinner, one should not worry and weep "O! I am a sinner, how can I be saved?"; one should completely renounce the thought "I am a sinner"; and concentrate keenly on meditation on the Self; then, one would surely succeed. There are not two minds — one good and the other evil; the mind is only one. It is the residual impressions that are of two kinds — auspicious and inauspicious. When the mind is under the influence of auspicious impressions it is called good; and when it is under the influence of inauspicious impressions it is regarded as evil.

The mind should not be allowed to wander towards worldly objects and what concerns other people. However bad other people may be, one should bear no hatred for them. Both desire and hatred should be eschewed. All that one gives to others one gives to one's self. If this truth is understood who will not give to others? When one's self arises all arises; when one's self becomes quiescent all becomes quiescent. To the extent we behave with humility, to that extent there will result good. If the mind is rendered quiescent, one may live anywhere.

15. *How long should inquiry be practised?*

As long as there are impressions of objects in the mind, so long the inquiry "Who am I?" is required. As thoughts arise they should be destroyed then and there in the very place of their origin, through inquiry. If one resorted to contemplation of the Self unintermittently, until the Self was gained, that alone would do. As long as there are enemies within the fortress, they will continue to sally forth; if they are destroyed as they emerge, the fortress will fall into our hands.

16. *What is the nature of the Self?*

What exists in truth is the Self alone. The world, the individual soul, and God are appearances in it, like silver in mother-of-pearl; these three appear at the same time, and disappear at the same time.

The Self is that where there is absolutely no "I" thought. That is called "Silence". The Self itself is the world; the Self itself is "I"; the Self itself is God; all is Siva, the Self.

17. *Is not everything the work of God?*

Without desire, resolve, or effort, the sun rises; and in its mere presence, the sun-stone emits fire, the lotus blooms, water evaporates; people perform their various functions and then rest. Just as in the presence of the magnet the needle moves, it is by virtue of the mere presence of God that the souls governed by the three (cosmic) functions or the fivefold divine activity perform their actions and then rest, in accordance with their respective *karmas*. God has no resolve; no *karma* attaches itself to Him. This is like worldly actions not affecting the sun, or like the merits and demerits of the other four elements not affecting the all-pervading ether.

18. *Of the devotees, who is the greatest?*

He who gives himself up to the Self that is God is the most excellent devotee. Giving one's self up to God means remaining constantly in the Self without giving room for the rise of any thoughts other than the thought of the Self.

Whatever burdens are thrown on God, He bears them. Since the supreme power of God makes all things move, why should we, without submitting ourselves to it, constantly worry ourselves with thoughts as to what should be done and how, and what should not be done and how not? We know that the train carries all loads, so after getting on it why should we carry our small luggage on our head to our discomfort, instead of putting it down in the train and feeling at ease?

19. *What is non-attachment?*

As thoughts arise, destroying them utterly without any residue in the very place of their origin is non-attachment. Just as the pearl-diver ties a stone to his waist, sinks to the bottom of the sea and there takes the pearls, so each one of us should be endowed with non-attachment, dive within himself and obtain the Self-Pearl.

20. *Is it not possible for God and the* Guru *to effect the release of a soul?*

God and the *Guru* will only show the way to release; they will not by themselves take the soul to the state of release.

In truth, God and the *Guru* are not different. Just as the prey which has fallen into the jaws of a tiger has no escape, so those who have come within the ambit of the *Guru's* gracious look will be saved by the *Guru* and will not get lost; yet, each one should by his own effort pursue the path shown by God or *Guru* and gain release. One can know oneself only with one's eye of knowledge, and not with somebody else's. Does he who is Rāma require the help of a mirror to know that he is Rāma?

21. *Is it necessary for one who longs for release to inquire into the nature of the categories* (tattvas)?

Just as one who wants to throw away garbage has no need to analyse it and see what it is, so one who wants to know the Self has no need to count the number of categories or inquire into their characteristics; what he has to do is to reject altogether the categories that hide the Self. The world should be considered like a dream.

22. *Is there no difference between waking and dream?*

Waking is long and a dream short; other than this there is no difference. Just as waking happenings seem real while awake, so do those in a dream while dreaming. In dream the mind takes on another body. In both waking and dream states thoughts, names and forms occur simultaneously.

23. *Is it any use reading books for those who long for release?*

All the texts say that in order to gain release one should render the mind quiescent; therefore their conclusive teaching is that the mind should be rendered quiescent; once this has been understood there is no need for endless reading. In order to quieten the mind one has only to inquire within oneself what one's Self is; how could this search be done in books? One should know one's Self with one's own eye of wisdom. The Self is within the five sheaths; but books are outside them. Since the Self has to be inquired into by discarding the five sheaths, it is futile to search for it in books. There will come a time when one will have to forget all that one has learned.

24. *What is happiness?*

Happiness is the very nature of the Self; happiness and the Self are not different. There is no happiness in any object of the world. We imagine through our ignorance that we derive happiness from objects. When the mind goes out, it experiences misery. In truth, when its desires are fulfilled, it returns to its own place and enjoys the happiness that is the Self. Similarly, in the states of sleep, *samādhi,* and fainting, and when the object desired is obtained or the object disliked is removed, the mind becomes inward-turned, and enjoys pure Self-Happiness. Thus the mind moves without rest, alternately going out of the Self and returning to it. Under the tree the shade is pleasant; out in the open the heat is scorching. A person who has been going about in the sun feels cool when he reaches the shade. Some one who keeps on going from the shade into the sun and then back into the shade is a fool. A wise man stays permanently in the shade. Similarly, the mind of the one who knows the truth does not leave *Brahman*. The mind of the ignorant, on the contrary, revolves in the world, feeling miserable, and for a little time returns to *Brahman* to experience happiness. In fact, what is called the world is only thought. When the world disappears, i.e. when there is no thought, the mind experiences happiness; and when the world appears, it goes through misery.

25. *What is wisdom-insight* (jñāna-dṛṣṭi)?

Remaining quiet is what is called wisdom-insight. To remain quiet is to resolve the mind in the Self. Telepathy, knowing past, present and future happenings and clairvoyance do not constitute wisdom-insight.

26. *What is the relation between desirelessness and wisdom?*

Desirelessness is wisdom. The two are not different; they are the same. Desirelessness is refraining from driving the mind towards any object. Wisdom means the appearance of no object. In other words, not seeking what is other than the Self is detachment or desirelessness ; not leaving the Self is wisdom.

27. *What is the difference between inquiry and meditation*?

Inquiry consists in retaining the mind in the Self. Meditation consists in thinking that one's self is *Brahman*, existence-consciousness-bliss.

28. *What is release*?

Inquiring into the nature of one's self that is in bondage, and realizing one's true nature is release.

3

Spiritual Instruction

Sri Natanananda, one of the earliest devotees, noted down the conversation which took place one day between Bhagavan and some of his devotees. We then arranged and expanded his notes and showed them to Bhagavan who appreciated them. They were then published under the name of *Upadesa Manjari* or Spiritual Instruction.

INVOCATION

I seek refuge at the sacred feet of the blessed Ramana, who performs the entire work of creation, preservation and destruction, while remaining wholly unattached, and who makes us aware of what is real and thus protects us, that I may set down his words fittingly.

IMPORTANCE OF THE WORK

Worshipping with the instruments (of thought, word and body) the sacred lotus feet of Bhagavān Śri Ramaṇa Maharṣi the very embodiment of the beginningless infinite supreme Brahman, the *Satchitānanda* (existence, consciousness, bliss), I have gathered this bouquet of the flowers of his instructions (*upadeśamanjari*) for the benefit of those who are foremost among the seekers of Liberation and who are adored by learned persons in order that they might adorn themselves with it and attain salvation.

This book is an epitome of the immortal words of that great soul, Śri Ramaṇa Maharṣi, whose teachings entirely dispelled the doubts and wrong notions of this humble person even as the sun dispels darkness.

The subject of this book is that eternal Brahman which shines as the pinnacle and heart of all the *Vedas* and *Āgamās*.

That incomparable Self-realization (*ātmasiddhi*) which is praised by all the Upaniṣads and which is the supreme good to be sought by all noble aspirants (*brahmavids*) is the theme of this work.

CHAPTER I

INSTRUCTION (*Upadeśa*)

1. *What are the marks of a real teacher* (*Sadguru*) ?

Steady abidance in the Self, looking at all with an equal eye, unshakable courage at all times, in all places and circumstances, etc.

2. *What are the marks of an earnest disciple* (*sadśiṣya*) ?

An intense longing for the removal of sorrow and attainment of joy and an intense aversion for all kinds of mundane pleasure.

3. *What are the characteristics of instruction* (*upadeśa*) ?

The word 'upadeśa' means : 'near the place or seat' (upa—near, deśa—place or seat). The *Guru* who is the embodiment of that which is indicated by the terms *sat*, *chit*, and *ānanda* (existence, consciousness and bliss), prevents the disciple who, on account of his acceptance of the forms of the objects of the senses, has swerved from his true state and is consequently distressed and buffeted by joys and sorrows, from continuing so and establishes him in his own real nature without differentiation.

Upadeśa also means showing a distant object quite near. It is brought home to the disciple that the Brahman which he believes to be distant and different from himself is near and not different from himself.

4. *If it be true that the Guru is one's own Self (ātman), what is the principle underlying the doctrine which says that, however learned a disciple may be or whatever occult powers he may possess, he cannot attain Self-realization (ātmasiddhi) without the grace of the Guru?*

Although in absolute truth the state of the *Gurū* is that of oneself it is very hard for the Self which has become the individual soul (*jīva*) through ignorance to realise its true state or nature without the grace of the *Gurū*.

All mental concepts are controlled by the mere presence of the real *Guru*. If he were to say to one who arrogantly claims that he has seen the further shore of the ocean of learning or one who claims arrogantly that he can perform deeds which are well-nigh impossible, 'Yes, you learnt all that is to be learnt, but have you learnt (to know) yourself? And you who are capable of performing deeds which are almost impossible, have you seen yourself?', they will bow their heads (in shame) and remain silent. Thus it is evident that only by the grace of the *Guru* and by no other accomplishment is it possible to know oneself.

5. *What are the marks of the Guru's grace?*

It is beyond words or thoughts.

6. *If that is so, how is it that it is said that the disciple realizes his true state by the Guru's grace?*

It is like the elephant which wakes up on seeing a lion in its dream. Even as the elephant wakes up at the mere sight of the lion, so too is it certain that the disciple wakes up from the sleep of ignorance into the wakefulness of true knowledge through the *Guru's* benevolent look of grace.

7. *What is the significance of the saying that the nature of the real Guru is that of the Supreme Lord (Sarveśvara)* ?

In the case of the individual soul which desires to attain the state of true knowledge or the state of Godhood (*Īśvara*) and with that object always practises devotion, the Lord who is the witness of that individual soul and identical with it, comes forth, when the individual's devotion has reached a mature stage, in human form with the help of *sat-chit-ānanda*. His three natural features and form and name which He also graciously assumes, and in the guise of blessing the disciple, absorbs him in Himself. According to this doctrine the *Guru* can truly be called the Lord.

8. *How then did some great persons attain knowledge without a Guru* ?

To a few mature persons the Lord shines as the light of knowledge and imparts awareness of the truth.

9. *What is the end of devotion (bhakti) and the path of Siddhānta (i.e., Śaiva Siddhānta)* ?

It is to learn the truth that all one's actions performed with unselfish devotion, with the aid of the three purified instruments (body, speech and mind), in the capacity of the servant of the Lord, become the Lord's actions, and to stand forth free from the sense of 'I' and 'mine'. This is also the truth of what the *Śaiva-Siddhāntins* call *parā-bhakti* (supreme devotion) or living in the service of God (*irai-pani-nittal*).

10. *What is the end of the path of knowledge (jāñna) or Vedānta?*

It is to know the truth that the 'I' is not different from the Lord (*Īśvara*) and to be free from the feeling of being the doer (*kartṛtva*, *ahamkāra*).

11. *How can it be said that the end of both these paths is the same?*

Whatever the means, the destruction of the sense of 'I' and 'mine' is the goal, and as these are interdependent, the destruction of either of them causes the destruction of the other; therefore in order to achieve that state of Silence which is beyond thought and word, either the path of Knowledge which removes the sense of 'I' or the path of devotion which removes the sense of 'mine', will suffice. So there is no doubt that the end of the paths of devotion and knowledge is one and the same.

NOTE: So long as the 'I' exists it is necessary to accept the Lord also. If any one wishes to regain easily the supreme state of identity (*sāyujya*) now lost to him, it is only proper that he should accept this conclusion.

12. *What is the mark of the ego?*

The individual soul of the form of 'I' is the ego. The Self which is of the nature of intelligence (*chit*) has no sense of 'I'. Nor does the insentient body possess a sense of 'I'. The mysterious appearance of a delusive ego between the intelligent and the insentient being the root cause of all these troubles, upon its destruction by whatever means, that which really exists will be seen as it is. This is called Liberation (*Mokṣa*).

CHAPTER II

PRACTICE (*Abhyāsa*)

1. *What is the method of practice?*

As the Self of a person who tries to attain Self-realization is not different from him and as there is nothing other than or superior to him to be attained by him, Self-realization being only the realization of one's own nature, the seeker of Liberation realizes, without doubts or misconceptions, his real nature by distinguishing the eternal from the transient, and never swerves from his natural state. This is known as the practice of knowledge. This is the enquiry leading to Self-realization.

2. *Can this path of enquiry be followed by all aspirants?*

This is suitable only for the ripe souls. The rest should follow different methods according to the state of their minds.

3. *What are the other methods?*

They are (i) *stuti*, (ii) *japa*, (iii) *dhyāna*, (iv) *yōga*, (v) *jñāna*, etc.

(i) *stuti* is singing the praises of the Lord with a great feeling of devotion.

(ii) *japa* is uttering the names of the gods or sacred *mantrās* like *Om* either mentally or verbally.

(While following the methods of *stuti* and *japa* the mind will sometimes be concentrated (*lit.* closed) and sometimes diffused (*lit.* open). The vagaries of the mind will not be evident to those who follow these methods).

(iii) *dhyāna* denotes the repetition of the names, etc., mentally (*japa*), with feelings of devotion. In this method the state of the mind will be understood easily. For the mind does not become concentrated and diffused simultaneously. When one is in *dhyāna* it does not contact the objects of the senses, and when it is in contact with the objects it is not in *dhyāna*. Therefore those who are in this state can observe the vagaries of the mind then and there and, by stopping the mind from thinking other thoughts, fix it in *dhyāna*. Perfection in *dhyāna* is the state of abiding in the Self (*lit.* abiding in the form of 'that', *tadākāranilai*).

As meditation functions in an exceedingly subtle manner at the source of the mind it is not difficult to perceive its rise and subsidence.

(iv) *yōga* : The source of the breath is the same as that of the mind ; therefore the subsidence of either leads effortlessly to that of the other. The practice of stilling the mind through breath control (*praṇāyāma*) is called yōga.

Fixing their minds on psychic centres such as the *sahasrāra* (*lit.* the thousand-petalled lotus) yōgis remain any length of time without awareness of their bodies. As long as this state continues they appear to be immersed in some kind of joy. But when the mind which has become tranquil emerges (becomes active again) it resumes its worldly thoughts. It is therefore necessary to train it with the help of practices like *dhyāna*, whenever it becomes externalised. It will then attain a state in which there is neither subsidence nor emergence.

(v) *jñāna* is the annihilation of the mind in which it is made to assume the form of the Self through the constant practice of *dhyāna* or enquiry (*vichāra*). The extinction of the mind is the state in which there is a cessation of all efforts. Those who are established in this state never swerve from their true state. The terms 'silence' (*mouna*) and inaction refer to this state alone.

NOTE: (1) All practices are followed only with the object of concentrating the mind. As all the mental activities like remembering, forgetting, desiring, hating, attracting, discarding, etc., are modifications of the mind, they cannot be one's true state. Simple, changeless being is one's true nature. Therefore to know the truth of one's being and to *be* it, is known as release from bondage and the destruction of the knot (*granthi nāśam*). Until this state of tranquillity of mind is firmly attained the practice of unswerving abidance in the Self and keeping the mind unsoiled by various thoughts is essential for an aspirant.

(2) Although the practices for achieving strength of mind are numerous, all of them achieve the same end. For it can be seen that whoever concentrates his mind on any object, will, on the cessation of all mental concepts, ultimately remain merely as that object. This is called successful meditation (*dhyāna siddhi*). Those who follow the path of enquiry realize that the mind which remains at the end of the enquiry is Brahman. Those who practise meditation realize that the mind which remains at the end of the meditation is the object of their meditation. As the result is the same in either case it is the duty of aspirants to practise continuously either of these methods till the goal is reached.

4. *Is the state of 'being still' a state involving effort or effortless?*

It is not an effortless state of indolence. All mundane activities which are ordinarily called effort are performed with the aid of a portion of the mind and with frequent breaks. But the act of communion with the Self (*ātma vyavahāra*) or remaining still inwardly is intense activity which is performed with the entire mind and without break.

Māyā (delusion or ignorance) which cannot be destroyed by any other act is completely destroyed by this intense activity which is called 'silence' (*mouna*).

5. *What is the nature of māyā?*

Māyā is that which makes us regard as non-existent the Self, the Reality, which is always and everywhere present and all-pervasive and self-luminous, and as existent the individual soul (*jīva*), the world (*jagat*), and God (*para*) which have been conclusively proved to be non-existent at all times and places.

6. *As the Self shines fully of its own accord why is it not generally recognised like the other objects of the world by all persons?*

Wherever particular objects are known it is the Self which has known itself in the form of those objects. For what is known as knowledge or awareness is only the potency of the Self (*ātma śakti*). The Self is the only sentient object. There is nothing apart from the Self. If there are such objects they are all insentient and therefore cannot either know themselves or mutually know one another. It is because the Self does not know its true nature in this manner that it seems to be immersed and struggling in the ocean of birth (and death) in the form of the individual soul).

7. *Although the Lord is all-pervasive it appears, from passages like 'adoring him through His Grace', that He can be known only through His grace. How then can the individual soul by its own efforts attain Self-realization in the absence of the Lord's Grace?*

As the Lord denotes the Self and as Grace means the Lord's presence or revelation, there is no time when the Lord remains unknown. If the light of the sun is invisible to the owl it is only the fault of that bird and not of the sun. Similarly can the unawareness by ignorant persons of the Self which is always of the nature of awareness be other than their own fault? How can it be the fault of the Self? It is because Grace is of the very nature of the Lord that He is well-known as 'the blessed Grace'. Therefore the Lord, whose nature itself is Grace, does not have to bestow His Grace. Nor is there any particular time for bestowing His Grace.

8. *What part of the body is the abode of the Self?*

The heart on the right side of the chest is generally indicated. This is because we usually point to the right side of the chest when we refer to ourselves. Some say that the *sahasrāra* (the thousand-petalled lotus) is the abode of the Self. But if that were true the head should not fall forward when we go to sleep or faint.

9. *What is the nature of the heart?*

The sacred texts describing it say:

Between the two breasts, below the chest and above the abdomen, there are six organs of different colour.[1] One of them resembling the bud of a water lily and situated two digits to the right is the heart. It is inverted and within it is a tiny orifice which is the dense darkness (ignorance) full of desires. All the psychic nerves (*nādis*) depend upon it. It is the abode of the vital forces, the mind and the light (of consciousness). (*See Appendix to Reality in Forty Verses* 18—19).

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[1] These are not the same as the Chakrams.

But although it is described thus, the meaning of the word heart (*hṛdayam*) is the Self (*ātman*). As it is denoted by the terms existence, consciousness, bliss, eternal and plenum (*sat, chit, ānandam, nityam, pūrṅam*) it has no differences such as exterior and interior or up and down. That tranquil state in which all thoughts come to an end is called the state of the Self. When it is realized as it is, there is no scope for discussions about its location inside the body or outside.

10. *Why do thoughts of many objects arise in the mind even when there is no contact with external objects?*

All such thoughts are due to latent tendencies (*pūrva samskāras*). They appear only to the individual consciousness (*jīva*) which has forgotten its real nature and become externalised. Whenever particular things are perceived, the enquiry 'Who is it that sees them'? should be made; they will then disappear at once.

11. *How do the triple factors* (*i.e., knower, known and knowledge*), *which are absent in deep sleep, samādhi etc., manifest themselves in the Self* (*in the states of waking and dreaming*)?

From the Self there arise in succession

(i) *Chidābhāsa* (reflected consciousness) which is a kind of luminosity.

(ii) *Jīva* (the individual consciousness) or the seer or the first concept.
(iii) Phenomena, that is the world.

12. *Since the Self is free from the notions of knowledge and ignorance how can it be said to pervade the entire body in the shape of sentience or to impart sentience to the senses?*

Wise men say that there is a connection between the source of the various psychic nerves and the Self, that this is the knot of the heart, that the connection between the sentient and the insentient will exist until this is cut asunder with the aid of true knowledge, that just as the subtle and invisible force of electricity travels through wires and does many wonderful things, so the force of the Self also travels through the psychic nerves and, pervading the entire body, imparts sentience to the senses, and that if this knot is cut the Self will remain as it always is, without any attributes.

13. *How can there be a connection between the Self which is pure knowledge and the triple factors which are relative knowledge?*

This is, in a way, like the working of a cinema as shown below :—

CINEMA SHOW	SELF
(i) The lamp inside (the apparatus)	(i) The self.
(ii) The lens in front of the lamp.	(ii) The pure (*sātvic*) mind close to the Self.

CINEMA SHOW	SELF
(iii) The film which is a long series of (separate photos).	(iii) The stream of latent tendencies consisting of subtle thoughts.
(iv) The lens, the light passing through it and the lamp, which together form the focussed light.	(iv) The mind, the illumination of it and the Self, which together form the seer or the *Jīva*.
(v) The light passing through the lens and falling on the screen.	(v) The light of the Self emerging from the mind through the senses, and falling on the world.
(vi) The various kinds of pictures appearing in the light of the screen.	(vi) The various forms and names appearing as the objects perceived in the light of the world.
(vii) The mechanism which sets the film in motion.	(vii) The divine law manifesting the latent tendencies of the mind.

Just as the pictures appear on the screen as long as the film throws the shadows through the lens, so the phenomenal world will continue to appear to the individual in the waking and dream states as long as there are latent mental impressions. Just as the lens magnifies the tiny specks on the film to a huge size and as a number of pictures are shown in a second, so the mind enlarges the sprout-like tendencies into tree-like thoughts and shows in a second innumerable worlds. Again, just as there is only the light of the lamp visible when there is no film, so the Self alone shines without the triple factors when the mental concepts in the form of tendencies are absent in the states of deep sleep, swoon and *samādhi*. Just as the lamp illumines the lens etc., while remaining unaffected, the Self illumines the ego (*chidābhāsa*), etc., while remaining unaffected.

14. *What is dhyāna (meditation)?*

It is abiding as one's Self without swerving in any way from one's real nature and without feeling that one is meditating. As one is not in the least conscious of the different states (waking, dreaming, etc.) in this condition, the sleep (noticeable) here is also regarded as *dhyāna.*

15. *What is the difference between dhyāna and samādhi?*

Dhyāna is achieved through deliberate mental effort; in *samādhi* there is no such effort.

16. *What are the factors to be kept in view in dhyāna?*

It is important for one who is established in his Self (*ātma niṣta*) to see that he does not swerve in the least from this absorption. By swerving from his true nature he may see before him bright effulgences, etc., or hear (unusual) sounds or regard as real the visions of gods appearing within or outside himself. He should not be deceived by these and forget himself.

NOTE: (i) if the moments that are wasted in thinking of the objects which are not the Self, are spent on enquiry into the Self, Self-realization will be attained in a very short time.

(ii) Until the mind becomes established in itself some kind of *bhāvanā* (contemplation of a personified god or goddess with deep emotion and religious feeling) is essential. Otherwise the mind will be frequently assailed by wayward thoughts or sleep.

(iii) Without spending all the time in practising *bhāvanās* like 'I am Śiva' or 'I am Brahman', which are regarded as *nirguṇōpāsana* (contemplation of the attributeless Brahman), the method of enquiry into oneself should be practised as soon as the mental strength which is the result of such *upāsana* (contemplation) is attained.

(iv) The excellence of the practice (*sādhana*) lies in not giving room for even a single mental concept (*vṛitti*).

17. *What are the rules of conduct which an aspirant (sādhaka) should follow?*

Moderation in food, moderation in sleep and moderation in speech.

18. *How long should one practise?*

Until the mind attains effortlessly its natural state of freedom from concepts, that is till the sense of 'I' and 'mine' exists no longer.

19. *What is the meaning of dwelling in solitude (ekānta-vāsa)?*

As the Self is all-pervasive it has no particular place for solitude. The state of being free from mental concepts is called 'dwelling in solitude'.

20. *What is the sign of wisdom (vīveka)?*

Its beauty lies in remaining free from delusion after realizing the truth once. There is fear only for one who sees at least a slight difference in the Supreme Brahman. So long as there is the idea that the body is the Self one cannot be a realizer of truth whoever he might be.

21. *If everything happens according to karma (prārabdha: the result of one's acts in the past) how is one to overcome the obstacles to meditation (dhyāna)?*

Prārabdha concerns only the out-turned, not the inturned mind. One who seeks his real Self will not be afraid of any obstacle.

22. *Is asceticism (sanyāsa) one of the essential requisites for a person to become established in the Self (ātma niṣta)?*

The effort that is made to get rid of attachment to one's body is really towards abiding in the Self. Maturity of thought and enquiry alone removes attachment to the body, not the stations of life (*āśramas*), such as student (*brahmachāri*), etc. For the attachment is in the mind while the stations pertain to the body. How can bodily stations remove the attachment in the mind? As maturity of thought and enquiry pertain to the mind these alone can, by enquiry on the part of the same mind, remove the attachments which have crept into it through thoughtlessness. But, as the discipline of asceticism (*sanyāsaśrama*) is the means for attaining dispassion (*vairāgya*), and as dispassion is the means for enquiry, joining an order of ascetics may be regarded, in a way, as a means of enquiry through dispassion. Instead of wasting one's life by entering the order of ascetics before one is fit for it, it is better to live the householder's life. In order to fix the mind in the Self which is its true nature it is necessary to separate it from the family of fancies (*samkalpas*) and doubts (*vikalpas*), that is to renounce the family (*samsāra*) in the mind. This is the real asceticism.

23. *It is an established rule that so long as there is the least idea of I-am-the-doer, Self-knowledge cannot be attained, but is it possible for an aspirant who is a householder to discharge his duties properly without this sense?*

As there is no rule that action should depend upon a sense of being the doer it is unnecessary to doubt whether any action will take place without a doer or an act of doing. Although the officer of a government treasury may appear, in the eyes of others, to be doing his duty attentively and responsibly all day long, he will be discharging his duties without attachment, thinking 'I have no real connection with all this money' and without a sense of involvement in his mind. In the same manner a wise householder may also discharge without attachment the various household duties which fall to his lot according to his past karma, like a tool in the hands of another. Action and knowledge are not obstacles to each other.

24. *Of what use to his family is a wise householder who is unmindful of his bodily comforts and of what use is his family to him?*

Although he is entirely unmindful of his bodily comforts, if, owing to his past karma, his family have to subsist by his efforts, he may be regarded as doing service to others. If it is asked whether the wise man derives any benefit from the discharge of domestic duties, it may be answered that, as he has already attained the state of complete satisfaction which is the sum total of all benefits and the highest good of all, he does not stand to gain anything more by discharging family duties.

25. *How can cessation of activity (nivṛtti) and peace of mind be attained in the midst of household duties which are of the nature of constant activity?*

As the activities of the wise man exist only in the eyes of others and not in his own, although he may be accomplishing immense tasks, he really does nothing. Therefore his activities do not stand in the way of inaction and peace of mind. For he knows the truth that all activities take place in his mere presence and that he does nothing. Hence he will remain as the silent witness of all the activities taking place.

26. *Just as the Sage's past karma is the cause of his present activities will not the impressions (vāsanas) caused by his present activities adhere to him in future?*

Only one who is free from all the latent tendencies (*vāsanas*) is a Sage. That being so how can the tendencies of karma affect him who is entirely unattached to activity?

27. *What is the meaning of brahmacharya?*

Only enquiry into Brahman should be called *brahmacharya.*

28. *Will the practice of brahmacharya which is followed in conformity with the (four) orders of life (āśramas) be a means of knowledge?*

As the various means of knowledge, such as control of senses, etc., are included in *brahmacharya* the virtuous practices duly followed by those who belong to the order of students (*brahmachārins*) are very helpful for their improvement.

29. *Can one enter the order of ascetics (sanyāsa) directly from the order of students (brahmacharya)?*

Those who are competent need not formally enter the orders of *brahmacharya*, etc., in the order laid down. One who has realized his Self does not distinguish between the various orders of life. Therefore no order of life either helps or hinders him.

30. *Does an aspirant (sādhaka) lose anything by not observing the rules of caste and orders of life?*

As the attainment (*anuṣṭhāna, lit.* practice) of knowledge is the supreme end of all other practices, there is no rule that one who remains in any one order of life and constantly acquires knowledge is bound to follow the rules laid down for that order of life. If he follows the rules of caste and orders of life he does so for the good of the world. He does not derive any benefit by observing the rules. Nor does he lose anything by not observing them.

CHAPTER III

EXPERIENCE (*Anubhava*)

1. *What is the light of consciousness?*

It is the self-luminous existence-consciousness which reveals to the seer the world of names and forms both inside and outside. The existence of this existence-consciousness can be inferred by the objects illuminated by it. It does not become the object of consciousness.

2. *What is knowledge (vijñāna)?*

It is that tranquil state of existence-consciousness which is experienced by the aspirant and which is like the waveless ocean or the motionless ether.

3. *What is bliss?*

It is the experience of joy (or peace) in the state of *vijñāna* free of all activities and similar to deep sleep. This is also called the state of *kevala nirvikalpa* (remaining without concepts).

4. *What is the state beyond bliss?*

It is the state of unceasing peace of mind which is found in the state of absolute quiescence, *jagrat-suṣhupti* (*lit.* sleep with awareness) which resembles inactive deep sleep. In this state, in spite of the activity of the body and the senses, there is no external awareness like a child immersed in sleep[1] (who is not conscious of the food given to him by his mother). A yōgi who is in this state is inactive even while engaged in activity. This is also called *sahaja nirvikalpa samādhi* (natural state of absorption in oneself without concepts).

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[1] The acts of sleeping children like eating and drinking are acts only in the eyes of others and not in their own. They do not therefore really do those acts in spite of their appearing to do them.

5. *What is the authority for saying that the entire moving and unmoving worlds depend upon oneself?*

The Self means the embodied being. It is only after the energy, which was latent in the state of deep sleep, emerges with the idea of 'I' that all objects are experienced. The Self is present in all perceptions as the perceiver. There are no objects to be seen when the 'I' is absent. For all these reasons it may undoubtedly be said that everything comes out of the Self and goes back to the Self.

6. *As the bodies and the selves animating them are everywhere actually observed to be innumerable how can it be said that the Self is only one?*

If the idea 'I am the body' is accepted,[1] the selves are multiple. The state in which this idea vanishes is the Self since in that state there are no other objects. It is for this reason that the Self is regarded as one only.

7. *What is the authority for saying that Brahman can be apprehended by the mind and at the same time that it cannot be apprehended by the mind?*

It cannot be apprehended by the impure mind but can be apprehended by the pure mind.

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[1] The idea that one is one's body is what is called *hṛdayagranthi* (knot of the heart). Of the various knots this knot, which binds together what is conscious with what is insentient, is what causes bondage.

8. *What is pure mind and what is impure mind?*

When the indefinable power of Brahman separates itself from Brahman and, in union with the reflection of consciousness (*chidābhāsa*), assumes various forms, it is called the impure mind. When it becomes free from the reflection of consciousness (*ābhāsa*), through discrimination, it is called the pure mind. Its state of union with the Brahman is its apprehension of Brahman. The energy which is accompanied by the reflection of consciousness is called the impure mind and its state of separation from Brahman is its non-apprehension of Brahman.

9. *Is it possible to overcome, even while the body exists, the karma (prārabdha) which is said to last till the end of the body?*

Yes. If the agent (doer) upon whom the karma depends, namely the ego, which has come into existence between the body and the Self, merges in its source and loses its form, will the karma which depends upon it alone survive? Therefore when there is no 'I' there is no karma.

10. *As the Self is existence and consciousness, what is the reason for describing it as different from the existent and the non-existent, the sentient and the insentient?*

Although the Self is real, as it comprises everything, it does not give room for questions involving duality about its reality or unreality, therefore it is said to be different from the real and the unreal. Similarly, even though it is consciousness, since there is nothing for it to know or to make itself known to, it is said to be different from the sentient and the insentient.

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CHAPTER IV

ATTAINMENT (*Ārudha*)

1. *What is the state of attainment of knowledge?*

It is firm and effortless abidance in the Self in which the mind which has become one with the Self does not subsequently emerge again at any time. That is, just as everyone usually and naturally has the idea, 'I am not a goat nor a cow nor any other animal but a man', when he thinks of his body, so also when he has the idea 'I am not the principles (*tatwas*) beginning with the body and ending with sound (*nāda*), but the Self which is existence, consciousness and bliss', the innate self-consciousness (*ātma prajña*), he is said to have attained firm knowledge.

2. *To which of the seven stages of knowledge (jñānabhoomikas)*[1] *does the sage (jñāni) belong?*

He belongs to the fourth stage.

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[1] The seven *jnāna bhoomikas* are :—

1. *śubhecchā* (the desire for enlightenment).
2. *vichārana* (enquiry).
3. *tanumānasa* (tenuous mind).
4. *satvāpatti* (self-realisation).
5. *asamsakti* (non-attachment).
6. *padārthābhāvana* (non-perception of objects).
7. *turyagā* (transcendence).

Those who have attained the last four bhoomikas are called *brahmavit*, *brahmavidvara*, *brahmavidvariya* and *brahmavid varistha* respectively.

3. *If that is so why have three more stages superior to it been distinguished?*

The marks of the stages four to seven are based upon the experiences of the realized person (*jīvan-mukta*). They are not states of knowledge and release. So far as knowledge and release are concerned no distinction whatever is made in these four stages.

4. *As liberation is common to all, why is the variṣṭha* (*lit. the most excellent*) *alone praised excessively?*

So far as the *variṣṭha's* common experience of bliss is concerned he is extolled only because of the special merit acquired by him in his previous births which is the cause of it.

5. *As there is no one who does not desire to experience constant bliss what is the reason why all sages* (*jñānis*) *do not attain the state of variṣṭa?*

It is not to be attained by mere desire or effort. Karma (*prārabdha*) is its cause. As the ego dies along with its cause even in the fourth stage (*bhūmika*), what agent is there beyond that stage to desire anything or to make efforts? So long as they make efforts they will not be sages (*jñānis*). Do the sacred texts (*śrutis*) which specially mention the *variṣṭha* say that the other three are unenlightend persons?

6. *As some sacred texts say that the supreme state is that in which the sense organs and the mind are completely destroyed, how can that state be compatible with the experience of the body and the senses?*

If that were so there would not be any difference between that state and the state of deep sleep. Further how can it be said to be the natural state when it exists at one time and not at another? This happens, as stated before, to some persons according to their karma (*prārabdha*) for some time or till death. It cannot properly be regarded as the final state. If it could it would mean that all great souls and the Lord, who were the authors of the Vedāntic works (*jñāna granthas*) and the Vedas, were unenlightened persons. If the supreme state is that in which neither the senses nor the mind exist and not the state in which they exist, how can it be the perfect state (*paripurṇam*)? As karma alone is responsible for the activity or inactivity of the sages, great souls have declared the state of *sahajanirvikalpa* (the natural state without concepts) alone to be the ultimate state.

7. *What is the difference between ordinary sleep and waking sleep (jāgrat suṣupti)?*

In ordinary sleep there are not only no thoughts but also no awareness. In waking sleep there is awareness alone. That is why it is called awake while sleeping, that is the sleep in which there is awareness.

8. *Why is the Self described both as the fourth state (turīya) and beyond the fourth state (turīyātita)?*

Turīya means that which is the fourth. The experiencers (jīvas) of the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep, known as *visva*, *taijāsa* and *prājña*, who wander successively in these three states, are not the Self. It is with the object of making this clear, namely that the Self is that which is different from them and which is the witness of these states, that it is called the fourth (ṭurīya). When this is known the three experiencers disappear and the idea that the Self is a witness, that it is the fourth, also disappears. That is why the Self is described as beyond the fourth (*turīyāṭiṭa*).

9. *What is the benefit derived by the sage from the sacred books (Śruṭis)* ?

The sage who is the embodiment of the truths mentioned in the scriptures has no use for them.

10. *Is there any connection between the attainment of supernatural powers (siddhis) and Liberation (mukti)* ?

Enlightened enquiry alone leads to Liberation. Supernatural powers are all illusory appearances created by the power of *māyā* (*māyāśakti*). Self-realization which is permanent is the only true accomplishment (*siddhi*). Accomplishments which appear and disappear, being the effect of *māyā*, cannot be real. They are accomplished with the object of enjoying fame, pleasures, etc. They come unsought to some persons through their Karma. Know that union with Brahman is the real aim of all accomplishments. This is also the state of Liberation (*aikya mukti*) known as union (*sāyujya*).

11. *If this is the nature of Liberation (mokṣa) why do some scriptures connect it with the body and say that the individual soul can attain liberation only when it does not leave the body* ?

It is only if bondage is real that liberation and the nature of its experiences have to be considered. So far as the Self (*puruṣa*) is concerned it has really no bondage in any of the four states. As bondage is merely a verbal assumption according to the emphatic proclamation of the Vedānta system, how can the question of liberation, which depends upon the question of bondage, arise when there is no bondage? Without knowing this truth, to enquire into the nature of bondage and Liberation, is like enquiring into the non-existent height, colour, etc., of a barren woman's son or the horns of a hare.

12. *If that is so, do not the descriptions of bondage and release found in the scriptures become irrelevant and untrue?*

No, they do not. On the contrary, the delusion of bondage fabricated by ignorance from time immemorial can be removed only by knowledge, and for this purpose the term 'Liberation' (*mukti*) has been usually accepted. That is all. The fact that the characteristics of Liberation are described in different ways proves that they are imaginary.

13. *If that is so, are not all efforts such as study (lit. hearing), reflection, etc., useless?*

No, they are not. The firm conviction that there is neither bondage nor Liberation is the supreme purpose of all efforts. As this purpose of seeing boldly, through direct experience, that bondage and Liberation do not exist, cannot be achieved except with the aid of the aforesaid practices, these efforts are useful.

14. *Is there any authority for saying that there is neither bondage nor Liberation?*

This is decided on the strength of experience and not merely on the strength of the scriptures.

15. *If it is experienced how is it experienced?*

'Bondage' and 'Liberation' are mere linguistic terms. They have no reality of their own. Therefore they cannot function of their own accord. It is necessary to accept the existence of some basic thing of which they are the modifications. If one enquires, 'for whom is there bondage and Liberation?' it will be seen, 'they are for me'. If one enquires, 'who am I?', one will see that there is no such thing as the 'I'. It will then be as clear as an *āmalaka* fruit in one's hand that what remains is one's real being. As this truth will be naturally and clearly experienced by those who leave aside mere verbal discussions and enquire into themselves inwardly, there is no doubt that all realised persons uniformly see neither bondage nor Liberation so far as the true Self is concerned.

16. *If truly there is neither bondage nor Liberation what is the reason for the actual experience of joys and sorrows?*

They appear to be real only when one turns aside from one's real nature. They do not really exist.

17. *Is it possible for everyone to know directly without doubt what exactly is one's true nature?*

Undoubtedly it is possible.

18. *How?*

It is the experience of everyone that even in the states of deep sleep, fainting, etc., when the entire universe, moving and stationary, beginning with earth and ending with the unmanifested (*prakṛti*), disappear, he does not disappear. Therefore the state of pure being which is common to all and which is always experienced directly by everybody is one's true nature. The conclusion is that all experiences in the enlightened as well as the ignorant state, which may be described by newer and newer words, are opposed to one's real nature.

B: POEMS

4

Five Hymns to Arunachala

The Five Hymns to Arunachala are the earliest poems of the Maharshi except for a few short verses. They were written about 1914, that is when he was about thirty-five years of age (he was born in December 1879). He was still living in the Virupakṣa cave on the hill. Some of his followers who were sadhus used to go into the town of Tiruvannamalai daily to beg for food and one day they asked him to make a song for them to sing as they went. At first he refused, saying that there were plenty of songs already made by the ancient Saivite Saints. They continued to press him, however, and he began to compose a song with a refrain at the end of each and every stanza. One day he started out to go round the hill. Palaniswami was walking behind him. After he had gone some way Ayyaswami seems to have called him back and given him a pencil and paper, saying: 'For some days now Swami has been composing stanzas every day. He may do so today as well, so you had better take this paper and pencil with you.' That day Sri Bhagavan practically completed the *Marital Garland of Letters*. It tells in glowing symbolism of the love and union between the human soul and God and is among the most profound and moving poems in any language. Although he who wrote it was established in the Bliss of indissoluble Union, it was written for the sake of devotees and expresses the attitude of the soul that still aspires.

The second, third and fourth poems were written at about the same time, and they also adopt the same attitude. Whereas the later poems of the Maharshi are more doctrinal, these hymns are more emotional, expressing more the attitude of devotion and aspiration.

The *Eleven Verses* and the *Eight Verses* are among the very few poems of the Maharshi that were written quite spontaneously without any request. As he himself said when speaking of them :

> 'The only poems that came to me spontaneously and compelled me, as it were, to write them without anyone urging me to do so are the *Eleven Stanzas to Sri Arunachala* and the *Eight Stanzas to Sri Arunachala*. The opening words of the *Eleven Stanzas* came to me one morning and even though I tried to suppress them saying 'What have I to do with these words?' they would not be suppressed till I composed a song bringing them in; and all the words flowed easily, without any effort. The remaining stanzas except two were also composed in the same way.
>
> 'Shortly afterwards Narayana Reddi came. He was at that time living in Vellore as an agent of Singer & Co., and he used to come from time to time. Aiyasami and Palani told him about the poems and he said, "Give them to me at once and I will go and get them printed." He had already published some books. When he insisted on taking the poems I told him he could do so and could publish the first eleven

as one form of poem and the rest, which were in a different metre, as another. To make up the required quota I at once composed two more stanzas and he took all the nineteen stanzas with him to get them published.'[1]

The fifth hymn, *Arunachala Pancharatna*, is of a different nature to the first four. The great Sanskrit poet and devotee Ganapati Sastri, who was a follower of Bhagavan, begged him to write a poem in Sanskrit. Bhagavan replied, laughing, that he scarcely knew any Sanskrit and no Sanskrit metres. Sastri, however, explained a metre to him and repeated his request. Bhagavan then composed a poem of five stanzas, two on one day and three on the following day. They were all in perfect, flawless Sanskrit. It is a cryptic account of the different paths to Realization and therefore a commentary has been included with the translation. This hymn is chanted daily at the time of the Veda-parayana.

It is to be understood that in all these hymns the word '*Arunachala*' means God and nothing less. It also, however, means the physical hill of Arunachala in South India where God is peculiarly manifested for the Maharshi and his disciples. From ancient times various spiritual centres in India have represented various spiritual paths and modes of doctrine, and Arunachala among them the doctrine of Advaita and the path of Self-enquiry. Although the ultimate doctrine and the supreme and most direct path; this, throughout the ages, has not been the most popular, because for most people it seemed too austere and difficult.

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[1] *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-knowledge*, pp 171-2 by Arthur Osborne (Rider & Co.).

The Maharshi attained Realization through a spontaneous act of Self-enquiry, with no human Guru. There is no place to do more than touch upon the mystery of this here. It is sufficient to note that the Maharshi agreed with all other Masters that a Guru is necessary, adding however that the Guru need not necessarily take human form. When he left home as a youth who was already a Sage, Arunachala drew him like a powerful magnet. He went straight there and stayed there for the rest of his life. It was Arunachala that he regarded as his Guru, and these hymns are written to Arunachala, to the Guru, to God Manifested, to the Absolute.

Through the potent Grace of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, the path of Self-enquiry was brought within the competence of men and women of this age, was indeed fashioned into a new path that can be followed anonymously in the conditions of the modern world, with no forms or ritual, nothing to distinguish a person outwardly from the world wherein he moves. This creation of a new path to suit the needs of the age has made Arunachala the spiritual centre of the world. More than ever, now that he has shed his physical body and is one with Arunachala, the Grace and guidance that emanates from him to those who turn to him and seek his aid is centred at Arunachala. It is the holy place and many are drawn there, both those who were disciples of the Maharshi in his lifetime and those who have come later.

It remains to be said that the literary Tamil in which the hymns were written can be used in an extremely cryptic manner and the first hymn especially abounds in passages which can be understood in more than one manner. In such cases the alternative readings are given.

Before coming to the Five Hymns we print first a verse that Sri Bhagavan wrote on Sri Ganesha, as being an auspicious opening to the poems. After this comes a verse that Sri Muruganar wrote on the significance of Arunachala and one by Bhagavan on the significance of the beacon that is lighted on its summit every year at the feast of Deepam. This is followed by an extract from the *Skanda Purana* on the glory of Arunachala, which Sri Bhagavan rendered into Tamil verse. Only after this follow the Five Hymns.

TO SRI GANESHA

One day in 1912 a potter came to the Virupakṣa cave with a small image of Sri Ganesha that he had made and presented it to Sri Bhagavan. A disciple suggested that both he and Sri Bhagavan should write a verse to celebrate the occasion, and this is what Sri Bhagavan wrote.

Him who begot you as a child you made
Into a beggar; as a child yourself
You then lived everywhere just to support
Your own huge belly; I too am a child.
Oh Child God in that niche! Encountering one
Born after you, is your heart made of stone?
I pray you look at me!

SIGNIFICANCE OF ARUNACHALA

The sudden rise of the blazing column of Annamalai[1] in front of Brahma and Vishnu and their utter distress at not being able to know the same is symbolic of the

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[1] Annamalai is another name for Arunachala.

sphurana of the Heart Centre as the real Self of the intellect and the ego.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BEACON

Getting rid of the 'I am the body' idea and merging the mind into the heart to realize the Self as non-dual Being and the Light of all is the real significance of *darshan* of the beacon of light on Annamalai, the centre of the universe.

SRI ARUNACHALA MAHATMYA[1]

THE GLORY OF SRI ARUNACHALA

Nandi[2] said :

'That is the holy place ! Of all Arunachala is the most sacred ! It is the heart of the world ! Know it to be the secret and sacred Heart-centre of Siva ! In that place He always abides as the glorious Aruna Hill !'

The day on which the ancient and wonderful linga of Arunachala took shape is the asterism of *Ārdrā* in the month of *Mrigasira*. And the day on which Vishnu and the other Devas worshipped the Lord in the form of effulgence is the day of *Mahāsivarātri*.

Siva said :

'Though in fact fiery, my lack-lustre appearance as a hill on this spot is an effect of grace and loving solicitude for the maintenance of the world. Here I always abide as the Great One (*Siddha*). Remember that in the interior of My Heart is transcendental glory with all the enjoyments of the world also.

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[1] Extracts from *The Skanda Purana*.

[2] Nandi is the foremost devotee of Siva always remaining in front of him.

'This glorious Arunachala is that of which the mere sight suffices to remove all demerits which divide up Being into egos and finite worlds.

'What cannot be acquired without endless pains — the true import of the Vedanta — is easily attained by all who can either directly sight this Hill or even mentally think of it from afar.

'I ordain that residence within a radius of three *Yojanas*[1] of this Hill shall by itself suffice to burn off all defects and effect union with the Supreme (even in the absence of initiation).'

Devi said :

'This is always the abode of pious devotees. Those who do evil to others here will, after suffering ills, be destroyed. Wicked persons will be completely bereft of their powers to do evil here in the twinkling of an eye. Do not fall into the burning fire of the anger of the Lord Arunachala who has assumed the form of the hill of fire.'

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[1] *Yojana* — 10 miles.

The Marital Garland of Letters

This joyful marital garland of letters which resembles a beam of the rays of the rising sun was sung by the noble Sage Ramana, the ocean of compassion, with the object of removing the delusion of the devotees who sought his grace. Those who look upon it as their sole refuge will realize within themselves that they are Arunachala and will reign in the world of Siva.[1]

INVOCATION

Gracious Ganapati[2] with Thy (loving) hand bless me, that I may make this a marital garland of letters worthy of Sri Arunachala, the Bridegroom !

REFRAIN

Arunachala Shiva ! Arunachala Shiva !
Arunachala Shiva ! Arunachala !
Arunachala Shiva ! Arunachala Shiva !
Arunachala Shiva ! Arunachala !

1. (*a*) Arunachala ! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala !

(*b*) Arunachala ! Thou dost root out the ego of those who dwell on their (spiritual) identity with Thee, Oh Arunachala !

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[1] This was composed by Sri Muruganar.
[2] Another name for Sri Ganesha.

2. May Thou and I be one and inseparable like *Alagu* and *Sundara*,[1] Oh Arunachala!

3. Entering (my) home and luring me (to Thine) why didst Thou keep me prisoner in Thy heart's cavern, Oh Arunachala?

4. Was it for Thy pleasure or for my sake Thou didst win me? If now Thou turn me away, the world will blame Thee, Oh Arunachala!

5. Escape this blame! Why didst Thou then recall Thyself to me? How can I leave Thee now, Oh Arunachala?

6. (*a*) Kinder far art Thou than one's own mother. Is this then Thy all-kindness, Oh Arunachala?

(*b*) Kinder indeed art Thou than one's mother, such is Thy Love, Oh Arunachala!

7. (*a*) Sit firmly in my mind lest it elude Thee, Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) Change not Thy nature and flee, but hold fast in my mind, Oh Arunachala!

(*c*) Be watchful in my mind, lest it change even Thee (into me) and rush away, Oh Arunachala!

8. (*a*) Display Thy beauty, for the fickle mind to see Thee for ever and to rest (in peace), Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) The strumpet mind will cease to walk the streets if only she find Thee. Disclose Thy Beauty then and hold her bound, Oh Arunachala!

(*c*) The mind by her unsteadiness prevents my seeking Thee and finding peace; (hold her and) grant me the vision of Thy Beauty, Oh Arunachala!

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[1] The Tamil word *alagu* and Sanskrit word *sundara* have the same meaning: 'beauty'. Alagu and Sundara were also the names of Sri Ramana's mother and father.

9. After abducting me if now Thou dost not embrace me, where is Thy chivalry, Oh Arunachala ?

10. Does it become Thee thus to sleep when I am outraged by others, Oh Arunachala ?

11. Even when the thieves of the five senses break in upon me, art Thou not still in my heart, Oh Arunachala !

12. One art Thou without a second ; who then could dare elude Thee and come in ? This is only Thy jugglery, Oh Arunachala !

13. Significance of OM unrivalled—unsurpassed ! Who can comprehend Thee, Oh Arunachala ?

14. As (Universal) Mother, it is Thy duty to dispense Thy Grace and save me, Oh Arunachala !

15. (*a*) Who can ever find Thee ? The Eye of the eye art Thou, and without eyes Thou seest, Oh Arunachala !

(*b*) Being the sight of the eye, even without eyes find me out Thyself. Who (but Thyself) can find out Thee, Oh Arunachala ?

16. As a lode-stone attracts iron, magnetizing it and holding it fast, so do Thou to me, Oh Arunachala !

17. (Unmoving) Hill, melting into a Sea of Grace, have mercy (on me) I pray, Oh Arunachala !

18. Fiery Gem, shining in all directions, do Thou burn up my dross, Oh Arunachala !

19. Shine as my Guru, making me free from faults and worthy of Thy Grace, Oh Arunachala !

20. Save me from the cruel snares of fascinating women and honour me with union with Thyself, Oh Arunachala !

21. Though I beg, Thou art callous and dost not condescend. I pray Thee ! say to me 'Fear not !' Oh Arunachala !

22. Unasked Thou givest ; this is Thy impershable fame. Do not belie Thy name, Oh Arunachala !

23. Sweet fruit within my hands, let me be mad with ecstasy, drunk with the Bliss of Thy Essence, Oh Arunachala !

24. Blazoned as the Devourer of Thy votaries, how can I survive who have embraced Thee, Oh Arunachala ?

25. (*a*) Thou, unruffled by anger ! What crime has marked me off (for Thy wrath), Oh Arunachala ?

(*b*) Thou, unruffled by anger ! What (austerities left) incomplete (in previous births) have won me Thy special favour, Oh Arunachala ?

26. Glorious Mountain of Love, celebrated by Gautama,[1] rule me with Thy gracious glance, Oh Arunachala !

27. Dazzling Sun that swallowest up all the universe in Thy rays, with Thy Light open the lotus of my heart I pray, Oh Arunachala !

28. (*a*) Let me, Thy prey, surrender unto Thee and be consumed, and so have Peace, Oh Arunachala !

(*b*) I came to feed on Thee, but Thou hast fed on me ; now there is Peace, Oh Arunachala !

29. O Moon of Grace, with Thy (cool) rays as hands, open (within me) the ambrosial orifice and let my heart rejoice, Oh Arunachala !

30. Tear off these robes, expose me naked, then robe me with Thy Love, Oh Arunachala !

31. There (in the heart) rest quiet ! Let the sea of joy surge, speech and feeling cease, Oh Arunachala !

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[1] The Gautama here referred to is not the Buddha but a Hindu Sage of that name who dwelt at Arunachala.

32. Do not continue to deceive and prove me; disclose instead Thy Transcendental Self, Oh Arunachala!

33. Vouchsafe the Knowledge of Eternal Life that I may learn the glorious Primal Wisdom, and shun the delusion of this world, Oh Arunachala!

34. Unless Thou embrace me, I shall melt away in tears of anguish, Oh Arunachala!

35. If spurned by Thee, alas! what rests for me but the torment of my *prarabdha*? [1] What hope is left for me, Oh Arunachala?

36. In silence Thou saidst, 'Stay silent!' and Thyself stood silent, Oh Arunachala! [2]

37. Happiness lies in peaceful repose enjoyed when resting in the Self. Beyond speech indeed is Thy prowess resting in the Self. Beyond speech indeed is This my State, Oh Arunachala!

38. (*a*) Thou didst display Thy prowess once, and, the perils ended, return to Thy repose, Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) Sun! Thou didst sally forth and (the siege of) illusion was ended. Then didst Thou shine motionless (alone), Oh Arunachala!

39. (*a*) (A dog can scent out its master); am I then worse than a dog? Steadfastly will I seek Thee and regain Thee, Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) Worse than a dog (for want of scent), how can I track Thee (to Thy home), Oh Arunachala?

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[1] *Prarabdha* is the part of destiny due to past actions (*karmas*) which bear fruit in the present birth.

[2] Silence is the highest and most perfect form of instruction which the *Guru* can give, for by its nature it is the closest to the essential object of such instruction, which is the realization by the disciple of the incommunicable and inexpressible Absolute.

40. Grant me wisdom, I beseech Thee, so that I may not pine for love of Thee in ignorance, Oh Arunachala!

41. (*a*) Not finding the flower open, Thou didst stay, no better than a (frustrated) bee, Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) (In sunlight the lotus blossoms), how then couldst Thou, the Sun of suns, hover before me like a flower bee, saying 'Thou art not yet in blossom', Oh Arunachala?

42. (*a*) 'Thou hast realized the Self even without knowing that it was the Truth. It is the Truth Itself!' Speak (thus if it be so), Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) Thou art the subject of most diverse views, yet art Thou not this only, Oh Arunachala?

(*c*) Not known to the *tattvas*, though Thou art their being! What does this mean, Oh Arunachala?

43. (*a*) That each one is Reality Itself, Thou wilt of Thy Nature show, Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) Reveal Thyself! Thou only art Reality, Oh Arunachala!

(*c*) 'Reality is nothing but the Self'; is this not all Thy message, Oh Arunachala?

44. 'Look within, ever seeking the Self with the inner eye, then will (It) be found.' Thus didst Thou direct me, beloved Arunachala!

45. (*a*) Seeking Thee within but weakly, I came back (unrewarded). Aid me, Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) Weak though my effort was, by Thy Grace I gained the Self, Oh Arunachala!

(*c*) Seeking Thee in the Infinite Self, I regained my own (Self), Oh Arunachala!

46. What value has this birth without Knowledge born of realization? It is not even worth speaking about, Oh Arunachala!

47. (*a*) Let me dive into the true Self, wherein merge only the pure in mind and speech, Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) I, by Thy Grace, am sunk in Thy Self, wherein merge only those divested of their minds and thus made pure, Oh Arunachala!

48. When I took shelter under thee as my One God, Thou didst destroy me altogether, Oh Arunachala!

49. Treasure of benign and holy Grace found without seeking, steady my wandering mind, Oh Arunachala!

50. On seeking Thy Real Self with courage, my raft capsized and the waters came over me. Have mercy on me, Arunachala!

51. (*a*) Unless Thou extend Thy hand of Grace in mercy and embrace me, I am lost, Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) Enfold me body to body, limb to limb, or I am lost, Oh Arunachala!

52. Oh Undefiled, abide Thou in my heart so that there may be everlasting joy, Arunachala!

53. (*a*) Mock me not, who seek Thy protection! Adorn me with Thy Grace and then regard me, Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) Smile with Grace and not with scorn on me, who come to Thee (for refuge), Oh Arunachala!

54. (*a*) When I approached, Thou didst not bend; Thou stoodst unmoved, at one with me, Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) Does it not shame Thee to stand there like a post, (leaving me) to find Thee by myself, Oh Arunachala?

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55. Rain Thy Mercy on me ere Thy Knowledge burn me to ashes, Oh Arunachala!

56. Unite with me to destroy (our separate identities as) Thou and me, and bless me with the state of ever vibrant joy, Oh Arunachala!

57. (*a*) When shall I (become) like the ether and reach Thee, subtle of being, that the tempest of thoughts may end, Oh Arunachala?

(*b*) When will waves of thought cease to rise? When shall I reach Thee, subtler than the subtle ether, Oh Arunachala!

58. (*a*) I am a simpleton devoid of learning. Do Thou dispel illusion, Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) Destroy Thou my wrong knowledge, I beseech Thee, for I lack the knowledge which the Scriptures lead to, Oh Arunachala!

59. When I melted away and entered Thee, my Refuge, (I found) Thee standing naked (like the famous *Digambara*)![1] Oh Arunachala!

60. In my unloving self Thou didst create a passion for Thee, therefore forsake me not, Oh Arunachala!

61. (*a*) Fruit shrivelled and spoilt is worthless; take and enjoy it ripe, Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) I am not (like) a fruit which is overripe and spoilt; draw me, then, into the inmost recess (of the heart) and fix me in Eternity, Oh Arunachala!

62. (*a*) Hast Thou not bartered cunningly Thyself for me (for my individuality is lost)? Oh, Thou art death to me, Arunachala!

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[1] *Digambara*, from *dik* — the directions of space, and *ambara* — cloth, i.e., one who is clothed in the directions of space, in other words, who goes naked.

(*b*) Hast thou not bartered happily Thyself for me (giving all and taking nothing)? Art Thou not blind, Oh Arunachala !

63. Regard me ! Take thought of me ! Touch me ![1] Mature me ! Make me one with Thee, Oh Arunachala !

64. Grant me Thy Grace ere the poison of delusion grips me and, rising to my head, kills me, Oh Arunachala !

65. Thyself regard me and dispel illusion ! Unless Thou do so who can intercede with Grace Itself made manifest, Oh Arunachala ?

66. With madness for Thee hast Thou freed me of madness (for the world); grant me now the cure of all madness, Oh Arunachala !

67. Fearless I seek Thee, Fearlessness Itself ! How canst Thou fear to take me, Oh Arunachala ?

68. Where is (my) ignorance of (Thy) Wisdom, if I am blessed with union to Thee, Oh Arunachala ?

69. (*a*) My mind has blossomed, (then) scent it with Thy fragrance and perfect it, Oh Arunachala !

(*b*) Espouse me, I beseech Thee, and let this mind, now wedded to the world, be wedded to Perfection, Oh Arunachala !

70. Mere thought of Thee has drawn me to Thee, and who can gauge Thy Glory (in Itself), Oh Arunachala ?

71. Thou hast possessed me, unexorcizable Spirit ! and made me mad (for Thee), that I may cease to be a ghost (wandering the world), Oh Arunachala !

72. Be Thou my stay and my support lest I droop helpless like a tender creeper, Oh Arunachala !

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[1] 'Regard me ! Take thought of me ! Touch me !' refer respectively to the three modes of initiation, by look, by thought, and by touch.

73. Thou didst benumb (my faculties) with stupefying powder [1], then rob me of my understanding and reveal the Knowledge of Thy Self, Oh Arunachala !

74. Show me the warfare of Thy Grace, in the Open Field where there is no coming and going, Oh Arunachala !

75. Unattached to the physical frame composed of the (five) elements, let me for ever repose happy in the sight of Thy Splendour, Oh Arunachala !

76. Thou hast administered the medicine of confusion to me, so must I be confounded ! Shine Thou as Grace, the cure of all confusion, Oh Arunachala !

77. Shine Thou selfless, sapping the pride of those who boast of their free will, Oh Arunachala !

78. I am a fool who prays only when overwhelmed (by misery), yet disappoint me not, Oh Arunachala !

79. Guard me lest I flounder storm-tossed like a ship without helmsman, Oh Arunachala !

80. Thou hast cut the knot which hid the vision of Thy Head and Foot (the limitless Self). Motherlike, shouldst Thou not complete Thy task, Oh Arunachala ? [2]

81. Be not (like) a mirror held up to a noseless man, but raise me (from my lowness) and embrace me, Oh Arunachala !

82. Let us embrace upon the bed of tender flowers, which is the mind, within the room of the body (or the Ultimate Truth), Oh Arunachala !

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[1] This verse alludes to the wandering ascetics who spirit away children for disciples, stupefying them with a pinch of powder, such as sacred ashes.

[2] The cutting of the knot which binds man to illusion implies the attainment of *nirvikalpa samadhi* : completion of the task refers to the state of *sahaja samadhi*.

83. How is it that Thou hast become famous from Thy constant union with the poor and humble, Oh Arunachala?

84. Thou hast removed the blindness of ignorance with the unguent of Thy Grace, and made me truly Thine, Oh Arunachala!

85. Thou didst shave clean my head (and I was lost to the world),[1] then Thou didst (show Thyself) dancing in Transcendent Space, Oh Arunachala!

86. (*a*) Though Thou hast loosed me from the mists of error and made me mad for Thee, why hast Thou not yet freed me from illusion; Oh Arunachala!

(*b*) Though Thou hast detached me from the world and made me cleave to Thee, Thy passion for me has not cooled, Oh Arunachala!

87. Is it true Silence to rest like a stone, inert and unexpansive, Oh Arunachala?

88. Who was it that threw mud to me for food[2] and robbed me of my livelihood, Oh Arunachala?

89. Unknown to all, stupefying me, Who was it that ravished my soul, Oh Arunachala?

90. I spoke thus to Thee, because Thou art my Lord; be not offended but come and give me happiness, Oh Arunachala!

91. Let us enjoy one another in the House of Open Space, where there is neither night nor day, Oh Arunachala![3]

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[1] The parenthesis is not a mere addition to explain the implication of shaving the head, for by an alternative reading, involving the change of a single letter, these words become explicit in the text.

[2] Literally, 'Threw mud in my mouth', an expression meaning 'caused my ruin'. The deeper meaning of this verse is: 'Who was it that individualized me and robbed me of my Perfect Being?'

[3] The allusion is to the 'cavity of the Heart' which is beyond time and space.

92. Thou didst take aim (at me) with darts of Love and then devoured me alive, Oh Arunachala !

93. Thou art the Primal Being, whereas I count not in this nor in the other world. What didst Thou gain then by my worthless self, Oh Arunachala ?

94. Didst Thou not call me in ? I have come in. Now measure out for me, (my maintenance is now Thy burden). Hard is Thy lot, Oh Arunachala !

95. The moment Thou didst welcome me, didst enter into me and grant me Thy divine life, I lost my individuality, Oh Arunachala !

96. Bless me that I may die without losing hold of Thee, or miserable is (my fate), Oh Arunachala !

97. From my home Thou didst entice me, then stealing into my heart didst draw me gently into Thine, (such is) Thy Grace, Oh Arunachala !

98. I have betrayed Thy (secret) workings. Be not offended ! Show me Thy Grace now openly and save me, Oh Arunachala !

99. Grant me the essence of the Vedas, which shine in the Vedanta, One without a second, Oh Arunachala !

100. (*a*) Even my slanders, treat as praise and guard me for ever as Thine own, I pray, Oh Arunachala !

(*b*) Let even slander be as praise to me, and guard me for ever as Thine own, I pray, Oh Arunachala !

(*c*) Place (Thy hand) upon my head ! make me partaker of Thy Grace ! do not abandon me. I pray, Oh Arunachala !

101. As snow in water, let me melt as Love in Thee, Who art Love itself, Oh Arunachala !

102. I had but thought of Thee as Aruna, and lo! I was caught in the trap of Thy Grace! Can the net of Thy Grace ever fail, Oh Arunachala?

103. Watching like a spider to trap (me in the web of Thy) Grace, Thou didst entwine me and when imprisoned feed upon me, Oh Arunachala!

104. Let me be the votary of the votaries of those who hear Thy name with love, Oh Arunachala!

105. Shine Thou for ever as the loving Saviour of helpless suppliants like myself, Oh Arunachala!

106. Familiar to Thine ears are the sweet songs of votaries who melt to the very bones with love for Thee, yet let my poor strains also be acceptable, Oh Arunachala!

107. Hill of Patience, bear with my foolish words, (regarding them) as hymns of joy or as Thou please, Oh Arunachala!

108. Oh Arunachala! my Loving Lord! Throw Thy garland (about my shoulders) wearing Thyself this one (strung) by me, Arunachala!

Blessed be Arunachala! blessed be His devotees!
Blessed be this Marital Garland of Letters!

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The Necklet of Nine Gems

1. In the court (of Chidambaram) Siva, though motionless by nature, dances (in rapture) before His Shakti who stands still. Know that in Arunachala He stands in His solemnity and She withdraws there into His Unmoving Self.

2. 'A', 'Ru', and 'Na' signify *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda* (Being, Consciousness, and Bliss), or again the Supreme Self, the individual Self, and their union as the One Absolute, expressed in the *mahavakya*[1] 'That thou art'; 'Achala' signifies Perfection. So worship Arunachala of shining golden lustre; for mere remembrance of Him ensures Deliverance.

3. Those who take refuge at the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord of Mercy presiding over Arunachala — their minds freed of attachment to riches, lands and relatives, and to caste and the like,[2] and ever made purer by seeking Thy Benign Grace — these rid themselves (of the misery) of darkness, and in the steady light of Thy ever-protecting Grace, which shines like the golden rays of the rising sun, they abide happy, sunk in the Ocean of Bliss.

4. Annamalai ![3] think not to let me pine away wistfully as one unmindful of Thee (for Thou art ever in my mind),[4]

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[1] A *vakya* is a Vedic utterance; four great utterances (*mahavakyas*) are especially distinguished, of which this (TATTVAMASI) is one.

[2] 'The like' are the four stages of life (*ashramas*).

[3] Arunachala.

[4] The parenthesis incorporates an alternative sense.

nor is it (right) that I should be reduced to dust mistaking the vile body for the Self. Turn Thy gracious and refreshing glance upon me, Eye of my eyes! Do not fail me, Lord, Who art Consciousness Itself, neither male nor female. Abide Thou in my Heart!

5. Lord! Who art Consciousness Itself, reigning over the sublime Shonagiri,[1] forgive all the grievous wrongs of this poor self, and by Thy Gracious Glance, benignant as a rain cloud, save me from being lost once more in the dreary waste, or else I cannot ford the grim (stream of universal) manifestation. (Thou art the Universal Mother);[2] what can match a mother's care for her child?

6. 'Killer of Kāma'[3] Thou art always called by Thy votaries. Lord Arunachala! a doubt arises if the title fits Thee. If it is fitting, how then can Kāma, the mighty, the invisible, continue, brave and valiant though he be, to creep into a mind sheltering under Thy Feet, Who art his Killer?

7. Oh Arunachala! as soon as Thou didst claim me, my body and soul were Thine. What else can I desire? Thou art both merit and demerit, Oh my Life! I cannot think of these apart from Thee. Do as Thou wilt then, my Beloved, but grant me only ever increasing love for Thy Feet!

8. To rescue me — born of virtuous Sundara and Sundari[4] in the holy place Tiruchuli, seat of Bhuminathesh-

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[1] Arunachala.

[2] Cf. *The Marital Garland of Letters*, v. 14.

[3] Kama is Cupid; his temptation of Shiva, while engaged in *tapas*, ended in his conflagration by a wrathful glance from Shiva's third eye. Out of pity for his disconsolate wife, Rati, Shiva subsequently granted him continued existence in a subtle body.

[4] Sundari means beauty and refers to Alagu, Bhagavan's mother.

wara — from the pain of miserable mundane life, He raised me to His state, that His Heart might so rejoice, the immanence of Shiva so shine forth, and the Self flourish. Such is Arunachala, famous throughout the universe!

9. Bearing and tending me in the world in the shape of my father and mother, Thou didst abide in my mind, and before I fell into the deep sea called *Jaganmāyā*[1] and was drowned, Thou didst draw me to thee, Arunachala, Consciousness Itself, such is the wonder of Thy Grace!

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[1] *Jaganmaya* is universal illusion.

Eleven Verses to Sri Arunachala

1. Now that by Thy Grace Thou hast claimed me, what will become of me unless Thou manifest Thyself to me, and I, yearning wistfully for Thee and harassed by the darkness of the world, and lost? Oh love, in the shape of Arunachala, can the lotus blossom without sight of the sun? Thou art the Sun of suns; Thou causest Grace to well up in abundance and pour forth as a stream!

2. Arunachala, Thou Form of Grace Itself! once having claimed me, loveless though I be, how canst Thou let me now be lost, and fail to fill me so with Love that I must pine for Thee unceasingly and melt within like wax over the fire? Oh Nectar springing up in the heart of devotees! Haven of my refuge! Let Thy pleasure be mine, for that way lies my joy, Lord of my life!

3. Drawing me with the cords of Thy Grace, although I had not even dimly thought of Thee, Thou didst decide to kill me outright. How then has one so weak as I offended Thee that Thou dost leave the task unfinished?[1] Why dost Thou torture me thus, keeping me suspended between life and death? Oh Arunachala! fulfil Thy wish, and long survive me all alone, Oh Lord!

4. What did it profit Thee to choose out me from all those struggling in *samsara*,[2] to rescue my helpless self from being lost and hold me at Thy Feet? Lord of the Ocean of Grace! Even to think of Thee puts me to shame.

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[1] *Alternatively*: What austerities left incomplete in previous births) have won me Thy special favour. (Cf. *The Marital Garland of Letters*, v. 25b). What more is left for me to gain or to fulfil?

[2] *Samsara* is the universal flux of manifestation.

(Long) mayst Thou live! I bow my head to Thee and bless Thee!

5. Lord! Thou didst capture me by stealth and all these days hast held me at Thy Feet! Lord! Thou hast made me (to stand) with hanging head, (dumb) like an image when asked what is Thy nature.[1] Lord! deign to ease me in my weariness, struggling like a deer that is trapped. Lord Arunachala! what can be Thy will? (Yet) who am I to comprehend Thee?

6. Lord of my life! I am ever at Thy Feet, like a frog (which clings) to the stem of the lotus; make me instead a honey-bee which (from the blossom of the Heart) sucks the sweet honey of Pure Consciousness; then shall I have Deliverance. If I am lost while clinging to Thy Lotus Feet, it will be for Thee a standing column of ignominy, Oh Blazing Pillar of Light, called Arunachala! Oh (wide) Expanse of Grace, more subtle than the ether!

7. Oh Pure One! if the five elements, the living beings and every manifest thing is nothing but Thy all-embracing Light, how then can I (alone) be separate from Thee? Since Thou shinest in the Heart, a single Expanse without duality, how then can I come forth distinct therefrom? Show Thyself planting Thy Lotus Feet upon the head of the ego as it emerges!

8. Thou hast withheld from me all knowledge of gradual attainment while living in the world, and set me at peace; such care indeed is blissful and not painful to anyone, for death in life is in truth glorious.[2] Grant me, wasteful and

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[1] *Alternatively*: Thou has made me (rest tense) like a bent bow when asked what is Thy nature.

[2] *Alternatively*: Thou has destroyed my ability to earn my living in the world and made a wastrel of me; this condition is miserable and unhappy; to die is better than to live in such ignominy.

mad (for Thee), the sovereign remedy of clinging to Thy Feet!

9. O Transcendent! I am the first of those who have not the Supreme Wisdom to clasp Thy Feet in freedom from attachment. Ordain Thou that my burden be transferred to Thee and my free will effaced, for what indeed can be a burden to the Sustainer (of the universe)? Lord Supreme! I have had enough (of the fruits) of carrying (the burden of) this world upon my head, parted from Thee. Arunachala, Supreme Self! think no more to keep me at a distance from Thy Feet!

10. I have discovered a New Thing! This Hill, the Lodestone of lives, arrests the movements of anyone who so much as thinks of it, draws him face to face with It, and fixes him motionless like Itself, to feed upon his soul thus ripened. What (a wonder) is this! Oh souls! beware of It and live![1] Such a destroyer of lives is this magnificent Arunachala, which shines within the Heart!

11. How many are there who have been ruined like me for thinking this Hill to be the Supreme?[2] Oh men who, disgusted with this life of intense misery, seek a means of giving up the body, there is on earth a rare drug which, without actually killing him, will annihilate anyone who so much as thinks of It. Know that It is none other than this Arunachala!

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[1] *Alternatively*: O souls! think upon It and be saved!

[2] *Alternatively*: How many are there who have lost (their ego) for having thought this Hill to be the Supreme?

Eight Stanzas to Sri Arunachala

'The Hill which draws to Itself those who are rich in jnanatapas[1] *is this Arunachala'.*

(From *Annamalai Venba,* by Guru Namasivaya, disciple of Guha Namasivaya)

1. Hearken; It stands as an insentient[2] Hill. Its action is mysterious, past human understanding. From the age of innocence it had shone within my mind that Arunachala was something of surpassing grandeur,[3] but even when I came to know through another that it was the same as Tiruvannamalai I did not realize its meaning. When it drew me up to it, stilling my mind, and I came close, I saw it (stand) unmoving.[4]

2. 'Who is the seer?' When I sought within, I watched the disappearance of the seer and what survived him. No thought of 'I saw' arose; how then could the thought 'I did not see' arise? Who has the power to convey this in word when even Thou (appearing as Dakshinamurthy) couldst do so in ancient days by silence only? Only to convey by silence Thy (Transcendent) State Thou standest as a Hill, shining from heaven to earth.

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[1] i.e. those who are ever intent on gaining wisdom.

[2] The adjective also bears the meaning 'eradicating (objective) knowledge'.

[3] 'To view Chidambaram, to be born in Tiruvarur, to die in Benares, or merely to think of Arunachala is to be assured of Liberation.' This couplet is commonly known in the Brahmin households of South India.

[4] *Alternatively*: I realized that It meant Absolute Stillness.

3. When I approach regarding Thee as having form, Thou standest as a Hill on earth. If (with the mind the seeker) looks for Thy (essential) form as formless, he is like one who travels the earth to see the (ever-present) ether. To dwell without thought upon Thy (boundless) nature is to lose one's (separate) identity like a doll of sugar when it comes in contact with the ocean (of nectar; and) when I come to realize who I am, what else is this identity of mine (but Thee), Oh Thou who standest as the towering Aruna Hill?

4. To look for God while ignoring Thee who art Being and Consciousness is like going with a lamp to look for darkness. Only to make Thyself known as Being and Consciousness, Thou dwellest in different religions under different (names and) forms. If (yet) men do not (come to) know Thee, they are indeed the blind who do not know the Sun. Oh Arunachala the Great, Thou peerless Gem, abide and shine Thou as my Self, One without a second!

5. As the string in (a necklet of) gems, it is Thou in Thy Unity who penetratest all the diversity of beings and religions. If, like a gem when it is cut and polished, the (impure) mind is worked against the wheel of the (pure) mind to free it of its flaws, it will take on the light of Thy Grace (and shine) like a ruby, whose fire is unaffected by any outward object. When a sensitive plate has been exposed to the Sun, can it receive impressions afterwards? Oh benign and dazzling Aruna Hill! is there anything apart from Thee?

6. Thou art Thyself the One Being, ever aware as the Self-luminous Heart! In Thee there is a mysterious Power (*Shakti*) which without Thee is nothing. From it proceeds

the phantom of the mind emitting its latent subtle dark mists, which, illumined by Thy Light (of Consciousness) reflected on them, appear within as thoughts whirling in the vortices of *prarabdha*, later developing into the psychic worlds and projected outwardly as the material world transformed into concrete objects which are magnified by the out-going senses and move about like pictures in a cinema show. Visible or invisible, O Hill of Grace, without Thee they are nothing!

7. Until there is the I-thought, there will be no other thought. Until other thoughts arise, (asking) 'To whom?' (will call forth the reply) 'To me'. He who pursues this closely, questioning 'What is the origin of the I?' and diving inwards reaches the seat of the mind (within) the Heart, becomes (there) the Sovereign Lord of the Universe.[1] O boundless Ocean of Grace and Effulgence called Arunachala, dancing motionless within the court of the Heart! there is no (longer any) dream there of such dualities as in and out, right and wrong, birth and death, pleasure and pain, or light and darkness.

8. The waters rise up from the sea as clouds, then fall as rain and run back to the sea in streams; nothing can keep them from returning to their source. Likewise the soul rising up from Thee cannot be kept from joining Thee again, although it turns in many eddies on its way. A bird which rises from the earth and soars into the sky can find no place of rest in mid-air, but must return again to earth. So indeed must all retrace their path, and when the soul finds the way back to its source, it will sink and be merged in Thee, O Arunachala, Thou Ocean of Bliss!

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[1] *Literally*: The Sovereign Lord under the shade of a single umbrella.

Five Stanzas to Sri Arunachala

1. Ocean of Nectar, full of Grace, engulfing the universe in Thy Splendour! Oh Arunachala, the Supreme Itself! be Thou the Sun and open the lotus of my heart in Bliss!

This is the opening stanza of the Pancharatna which in the form of a *stotra* (praise of God) contains the gist of Supreme knowledge born of Realization. It is said to be like a *sutra,* very terse with much deeper significance than appears superficially.

Arunachala — *Aruna* (Light) plus *Achala* (mountain), means the *Tejolingam* (symbol of light) of Siva. Its significance for the individual is that when one gets beyond body-consciousness, the inner Self shines pure and clear.

Ordinary loss of body-consciousness, as in shocks, results only in darkness, whereas the same brought about voluntarily for the purpose of Self-Realization, ends in the Illumination of the Self, by the sole Grace of God.

Such illumination destroys the ego, producing complete self-surrender to the Lord. The Lord is Eternal; the sense of Eternity is Bliss (Nectar).

Just as the lotus bud, flourishing in marshy pools, blossoms at sunrise, so also the heart, behind the soiled mind, shines forth by the Grace of God who is the Self of all selves and who is externally visible as Arunachala. But this sun, after rising up, never sets again and the Heart of the Realized Soul is in blossom once and for all.

2. Oh Arunachala! in Thee the picture of the universe is formed, has its stay, and is dissolved; this is the sub-

lime Truth. Thou art the Inner Self, Who dancest in the Heart as 'I'. 'Heart' is Thy name, Oh Lord!

This sloka refers to God first as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, and then as realized by the Enlightened.

The Liberated say that just as God is the stay of the universe, so also, the Heart is of the individual. The part must be of the nature of the whole; the Whole (God) is Infinity. Therefore, there is no distinction between the Heart and God.

God is consciousness, as also is the Heart. Self-contained and sublime, it manifests as the individual self concomitantly with an individualizing force perceptible as the 'ego' or 'I'. If the ego is traced back, they say that there becomes perceptible a vibration from the Heart, signifying the Real Self.

3. *He who turns inward with untroubled mind to search where the consciousness of 'I' arises, realizes the Self, and rests in Thee, Oh Arunachala! like a river when it joins the ocean.*

This sloka deals with *Jnāna mārga*, the Path of Knowledge, followed by enquirers and seekers after Truth. It is one of the three or even four Paths to Realization of Self. These are *Jnāna, Yoga, Bhakti*, and *Karma*.

The ocean, being the store of all waters, evaporates, clouds are formed, and rain falls, giving rise to rivers which as soon as formed become restless, as it were, course along as if to find their origin and repose only after being discharged into the ocean. Similarly, the individual emanating from the Heart is restless, and becomes eager to find his own source. The way is the trail of the 'ego' into the Heart.

4. *Abandoning the outer world, with mind and breath*

controlled, to meditate on Thee within, the Yogi sees Thy Light, Oh Arunachala! and finds his delight in Thee.

This stanza deals with *Yoga marga*, described in Patanjali's 'Yoga Sutras'.

While a *Jnani* seeks within for the source of the ego and is liberated on tracing it to the Heart, a *Yogi*, craving to see the Glory of God, turns away from other pursuits and concentrated on Him (in the shape or name of Arunachala). The Hill, though material in outward appearance, becomes full of life, and perceptible in the transcendental vision of the Yogi, as the Universal Glorious Light, the same as the Self.

5. *He who dedicates his mind to Thee and, seeing Thee, always beholds the universe as Thy figure, he who at all times glorifies Thee and loves Thee as none other than the Self, he is the master without rival, being one with Thee, Oh Arunachala! and lost in Thy Bliss.*

The first part of this stanza deals with *Bhakti mārga*. Glorifying God with intense love, one passes beyond *samsara* and is happy at being merged in Him. This is *Bhakti*. The transcendental vision reveals Arunachala as one's own Master, and such repeated experiences convince one of the Immanence of God. Complete surrender of self ensues and what remains over is only the all-pervading, and everpresent Glorious Being-Consciousness. Transcendence sweeps away names and forms and the result is Infinity, Eternity.

The second part of the stanza deals with *Karma marga*. Feeling God's immanence everywhere, one considers oneself not as the agent, but as a tool to serve God in the shape of one's surroundings.

There are three aspects of God according to one's own realization. They are :

Sat (Being), *Chit* (Consciousness), *Ananda* (Bliss).

The *Sat* aspect is emphasized by *jnanis* who are said to repose in the Essence of Being after incessant search for the same and with their individuality lost in the Supreme.

The *Chit* aspect is for *yogis* who exert themselves to control their breath in order to steady the mind and are then said to see the Glory (consciousness of Being) of God as the One light radiating in all directions.

The *Ananda* aspect is for devotees who become intoxicated with the nectar of the love of God and lose themselves in Blissful experience. Unwilling to leave this, they remain for ever merged in God.

The four *margas, Karma, Bhakti, Yoga,* and *Jnana*, are not exclusive of one another. Each is however described separately in classical works only to convey an idea of the appropriate aspect of God to appeal readily to the aspirant according to his pre-disposition. This *stotra,* though short, is compact and can be so expanded as to be of interest also to scholars and philosophers.

Arunachala Ramana is the Supreme Being who sports within the lotus-hearts of all beings, beginning with Hari, in the form of consciousness. If one enters, with a heart melting with devotion, the abode in which the Supreme Being is shinning, his eye of knowledge will be opened and he will become consciousness itself. The truth will become clear to him.

May the great name of divine Arunachala last for ever! May the five verses named after him last for ever! May the feet of the great Ramana from whose mouth this flower has come forth live for ever! May the pious devotees who seek refuge at those feet live for ever.

5

The Essence of Instruction

(UPADESA SARAM)

There is an old legend that a group of Rishis once lived in the Daruka forest together, practising rites by which they acquired supernatural powers. By the same means they hoped to attain final Liberation. In this, however, they were mistaken, for action can only result in action; not in the cessation of action; rites can produce powers but not the Peace of Liberation which is beyond rites and powers and all forms of action. Siva determined to convince them of their error and therefore appeared before them as a wandering *sadhu*. Together with him came Vishnu in the form of a beautiful lady. All the Rishis were smitten with love for this lady and thereby their equilibrium was disturbed and their rites and powers were adversely affected. Moreover their wives, who were also living with them in the forest, all fell in love with the strange *sadhu*. Incensed at this, they conjured up an elephant and a tiger by magic rites and sent them against him. Siva, however, slew them easily and took the elephant's skin for a robe and the tiger's for a wrap. The Rishis then realized that they were up against one more powerful than themselves and they bowed down to him and asked him for instruction. He then explained to them that it is not by action but by renunciation of action that one attains to Liberation.

The poet, Muruganar wanted to write 100 verses on this theme but he could not readily proceed beyond 70 verses. It then occurred to him that Bhagavan was the proper person to write the verses relating to Siva's instructions. He therefore begged Bhagavan to compose them and Bhagavan accordingly composed thirty Tamil verses. He himself later translated these thirty verses into Sanskrit. These thirty verses were subsequently translated by Bhagavan into Telugu under the name of *Anubhuti Saram* first and *Upadesa Saram* afterwards. Bhagavan likewise rendered them into Malayalam verses. He himself later translated these thirty verses into Sanskrit, and the Sanskrit version, known as *Upadesa Saram*, was daily chanted before him together with the Vedas and continues to be chanted before his shrine ; that is to say that it is treated as a scripture. He refers to the various paths to Liberation, grading them in order of efficiency and excellence, and showing that the best is Self-enquiry.

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1. Action (karma) bears fruit (in action), for so the Creator ordains. But is it God? (It cannot be for) it is not sentient.

2. The results of action pass away, and yet leave seeds that cast the agent into an ocean of action. Action (therefore) does not bring Liberation.

3. But acts performed without any attachment, in the spirit of service to God, cleanse the mind and point the way to Liberation.

4. This is certain : worship, incantations, and meditation are performed respectively with the body, the voice, and the mind and are in this ascending order of value.

5. One can regard this eightfold[1] universe as a manifestation of God; and whatever worship is performed in it is excellent as the worship of God.

6. The repetition aloud of His name is better than praise. Better still is its faint murmur. But the best is repetition within the mind — and that is meditation, above referred to.

7. Better than such broken thought (meditation) is its steady and continuous flow like the flow of oil or of a perennial stream.

8. The lofty attitude 'He am I' is preferable to the attitude 'He is not me'.

9. Remaining in the Real Being, transcending all thought, through intense devotion, is the very essence of Supreme *Bhakti*.

10. 'Absorption into the source' or core of Existence (or the Heart) is what the paths of *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Yoga*, and *Jnana* teach.

11. As birds are caught with nets, so by holding the breath, the mind is restrained and absorbed. This (breath-regulation) is a device for effecting absorption.

12. For mind and life-breath (*prana*), expressed in thought and action, diverge and branch out, but they spring from a single root.

13. Absorption has two forms, *laya* and *nasha*. That which is merely absorbed in *laya* revives; if it is dead, it does not revive.

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[1] Eightfold in that it is composed of the five elements, the sun and moon and the individual being.

14. When the mind gets absorbed by breath-restraint, then it will 'die' (i.e. its form will perish) if fixed to a single point.

15. The great yogi whose mind is extinguished and who rests in Brahman, has no karma, as he has attained his true nature (Brahman).

16. When the mind withdraws from external objects of sense and beholds (i.e. engages in mystic introspection of) its own effulgent form, that is true wisdom.

17. When the mind unceasingly investigates its own nature, it transpires that there is no such thing as mind. This is the direct path for all.

18. The mind is merely thoughts. Of all thoughts, the thought 'I' is the root. (Therefore) the mind is only the thought 'I'.

19. 'Whence does this "I" arise?' Seek for it within; it then vanishes. This is the pursuit of Wisdom.

20. Where the 'I' vanished, there appears an 'I-I' by itself. This is the Infinite (*Purnam*).

21. This is always, the true import of the term 'I'. For we do not cease to exist even in the deepest sleep, where there is no waking 'I'.

22. The body, senses, mind, life--breath (*prana*), and ignorance (*avidya* or *sushupti*) are all insentient and not the Real. I am the Real (*Sat*). These (sheaths) I am not.

23. As there is no second being to know that which is, 'that which is' is conscious. We are that.

24. Creatures and Creator are One in Being. Their differences are the degrees of their knowledge and other attributes.

25. When the creature sees and knows himself without attributes, that is knowledge of the Creator, for the Creator appears as no other than the Self.

26. To know the Self is to be the Self—as there are not two separate selves. This (state) is *thanmaya nishta* (abiding as That).

27. That is real knowledge which transcends both knowledge and ignorance. There is no object to be known There.

28. When one's true nature is known, then there is Being without beginning and end; It is unbroken Awareness-Bliss.

29. Remaining in this state of Supreme Bliss, past all thoughts of bondage and release, is abiding in the service of the Supreme.

30. The Realization of That which subsists when all trace of 'I' is gone, is good tapas. So sings Ramana the Self of all.

6

Reality in Forty Verses

Once Bhagavan composed twenty Tamil stanzas containing his important teachings. They were not written in any particular order to form a poem. Sri Muruganar therefore suggested that Bhagavan should write twenty stanzas more to make the conventional forty. Accordingly Bhagavan composed twenty more stanzas. Out of these forty stanzas Kavya Kanta Ganapati Muni selected two as the invocatory stanzas. Then Bhagavan wrote two more to complete the forty. Some of the stanzas were translations from Sanskrit, but as devotees wanted all the forty verses to be original they were eliminated and new stanzas composed in their place. The verses were all arranged in a continuous order to form a poem. Later a supplement consisting of a second forty verses was added. So indifferent to authorship was Bhagavan that he did not write all those supplementary verses himself. When he came upon a suitable one he used it — mostly translations from Sanskrit and when not, he made one. The verses eliminated from the original forty verses were included in the Supplement. In this volume those verses which he took from older sources are printed in italics.

These eighty verses are the most comprehensive exposition of the Maharshi's teaching. A number of translations have been made and commentaries written on them. They have been published as a separate booklet by the Asramam under the titles 'Ulladu Nārpadu', 'Sad-Vidya' or 'Trūth

Revealed'. Bhagavan translated these verses into Telugu prose under the name of *Unnadi Nalupadi* and into Malayalam verse under the name of *Saddarsanam.*

INVOCATORY

1. If there were not being could there be any idea of being? Since that which is is free from mental concepts and is within oneself, who is there to contemplate it? It is called the heart. Know that to remain within oneself as being is to contemplate it.

2. Those who have great fear of death seek refuge at the feet of the Supreme Lord who is without birth and death, in order to overcome their fear. They then die to themselves along with their adjuncts (sense of 'I' and 'mine'). Will those who are (have realised themselves to be) deathless entertain again the thought of death?

THE TEXT

1. Since we perceive the world we must agree unanimously that there is a power which is capable of becoming multiple. The picture of name and form, he who sees it, the cloth on which it is based (painted) and the light which illuminates it are all oneself.

2. Every system of thought postulates the three fundamentals; individual, God and world. Only the one appears as the three. It is only as long as there is an ego-sense that one says that the three are really three. The best thing is to renounce the ego-sense and remain in one's true state.

3. 'The world is real', 'No, it is a false appearance', 'The world is sentient', 'No, it is not', 'The world is happiness', 'No, it is not'.—what is the use of such disputes?

That state is agreeable to all in which, ignoring the world, one knows one's Self, abandoning both unity and duality and the ego-sense is gone.

4. If one has a form the world and God will also have forms. If one has no form who is there to see their forms, and how? Can anything be seen without the eye? The real eye is the Self which is the eye of Infinity.

5. The body is of the form of the five sheaths. Therefore these five are included in the term 'body'. Is there a world in the absence of the body? Has any one ever seen the world without a body?

6. The world is of the form of the five (kinds of) sense objects and nothing else. These five sense-objects are known by the five sense organs. As the one mind knows the world by means of the five sense organs, is there a world apart from the mind? Answer (me).

7. Although the world and awareness of it rise and sink together the world is perceived through awareness. That in which the world and the awareness of it rise and set is the Plenitude (*purnam*) which shines without rising (or setting).

8. Under whatever name and form one worships That which has no name and form it is only a means of perceiving it. To know the truth of one's Self as the true Reality and merge and become one with It is the only true perception (Realization). Understand this.

9. The dyads and triads always depend upon the One. If one sees within one's mind what that One is they disappear. Only those who have seen this have seen the Truth. Know that they will never be perturbed.

10. There is no knowledge apart from ignorance and no ignorance apart from knowledge. Who is it who has this

knowledge and ignorance? That Knowledge which knows the Self which is the basis of both is the real Knowledge.

11. Is it not ignorance to know all else without knowing the Self which is the source of knowledge? Can it be knowledge? When the Self which is the basis of knowledge and the object of knowledge is known, ignorance and knowledge cease to exist.

12. What is neither knowledge nor ignorance is (real) knowledge. Knowledge of (objects) cannot be real knowledge. The Self which shines without there being anything else to know or be known is knowledge. Know that it is not nothingness.

13. The Self which is knowledge is alone the truth. The knowledge of multiplicity is ignorance. This ignorance, which is unreal, has no existence apart from the Self which is knowledge. Have diverse gold ornaments any reality apart from the gold of which they are made?

14. If the first person exists the second and third persons will also exist. If the reality of the first person is enquired into and the first person ceases to exist the second and third persons will (also) cease to exist and all will shine as One. This is one's true nature.

15. The past and the future depend upon the present. They are also present while they are current. There is only the present. Without knowing this truth, trying to know the past and the future is like trying to count without the unit (one.)

16. When we look into them, what are time and space apart from us? If we are our bodies we are involved in time and space, but are we? We are the same now, then and at all times, here, there, and everyhere. We exist; we who are beyond time and space alone are.

17. To those who have not realized the Self as well as to those who have, the body is 'I'. To those who have not realized the 'I' is limited to the body. To those who have, within the body, realized the Self the 'I' shines boundless. Know that this is the difference between them.

18. The world is real to those who have realized (the Self) as well as to those who have not. To those who have not realized, the world is merely the world; to those who have, truth is formless and shines as the substratum of the world. Know that this is the difference between them.

19. The dispute as to which prevails, fate or free-will, interests only those who do not know the source of both. Those who have realized the Self which is the ground of fate and free-will are free from them. Will they again resort to them?

20. Seeing God without seeing the Self who sees is only a mental image. Only he who has seen himself has seen God, since he has lost his individuality and nothing remains but God.

21. If it be asked, 'What is the meaning of the old scriptural texts which speak of seeing oneself as seeing God?' the reply is (the counter-question) how, being one, one can see oneself? And if one cannot see oneself how is one to see God? Only by being swallowed up by God.

22. How is it possible for the mind to know the Lord who imparts His light to the mind and shines within the mind except by turning the mind inward and fixing it in the Lord?

23. This body does not say 'I'. Nobody says 'I did not exist during sleep'. Once the 'I' arises everything arises. Enquire with a keen mind whence this 'I' arises.

24. The inert body does not say 'I'. Being-Consciousness does not rise (and set). Between them and limited to the measure of the body something emerges as 'I'. It is this that is known as the knot (*granthi*) between the consciousness and the inert and also as bondage, individual being, subtle body, ego, the samsara, mind. This know.

25. Attaching itself to a form (that is, the body) this formless ghost of an ego comes into existence. Attaching itself to a form it endures. Attaching itself to a form it feeds (experiences) and grows. On relinquishing one form it attaches itself to another. But when sought after it takes to flight. This know.

26. If the ego is, everything else is too. If the ego is not, nothing else is. Indeed the ego is everything. Therefore the enquiry what it is really means giving up everything. This know.

27. The state in which the 'I' does not arise is the state of being 'That'. Without seeking the place from which the 'I' arises, how is one to bring about the extinction of oneself characterised by the non-arising of the 'I'? And without effecting that extinction how is one to abide in one's true State in which one is That? Answer me.

28. Just as one would dive into water to see (recover) an article (which had fallen in) one should dive deeply into oneself with speech and breath restrained, and find out the place from which the 'I' arises. This know.

29. Seeking the source of the 'I' inwardly, with the inturned mind, without uttering the word 'I' is the true path of Knowledge. Meditation on 'I am not this', 'I am that' may be auxiliary but cannot be the enquiry.

30. When the mind, turning inward, inquires, 'Who am I?' and reaches the heart, that which is 'I' (ego) sinks

crest-fallen and the One (Self) appears of its own accord as 'I-I'. Though it appears thus it is not the ego; it is the Whole. It is the real Self.

31. To one who has destroyed himself (his ego) and is awake to his nature as bliss, what remains to be accomplished? He does not see anything (as being) other than himself. Who can comprehend his state?

32. Although the scriptures proclaim 'That thou art' it is a sign of weakness to meditate: 'I am not this but That' instead of enquiring what one is and remaining so; for one is always That.

33. It is absurd to say either: 'I have not realized the Self' or 'I have realized the Self'. Why? Are there two selves for one to be the object of the other? It is the experience of all that it (the Self) is one.

34. It is due to the illusion born of ignorance that, instead of realizing that which is always the nature of every one and which shines in the heart and abiding as that, men dispute whether it is or is not, has form or not, is single or dual or neither.

35. To realize the Self which is always present and to remain as that is (the real) attainment. All other attainments are like those which appear in a dream. Are these real when one awakes? Will those who have got rid of delusion and are established in their true state be deluded again?

36. If we think, 'I am the body', the thought, 'no, I am That' will help us to abide as That; but should we keep on thinking that? Does (a man) keep on thinking he is a man? We just are That.

37. The precept: 'duality while seeking and non-duality on attainment' is not right. Who else is one but the tenth man,[1] both while anxiously searching for one's Self and after attaining one's Self?

38. As long as we are the performers of actions we have to undergo their consequences but when, as a result of enquiring who is the performer, one knows one-self, the sense of being the performer is lost and one is set free from the three kinds of karma.[2] The (resulting) state of Liberation is eternal.

39. It is only so long as the thought 'I am bound' continues that the thoughts of bondage and Liberation continue. When, through the enquiry 'Who is bound?' one sees (realizes) one's Self, the ever-attained and eternally free Self alone remains. The thought of bondage does not remain, so how can the thought of Liberation?

40. If it is said that Liberation is of three kinds, with form, without form and with and without form, we say Liberation is the destruction of the ego which discusses whether it is with form, without form or with and without form.

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[1] This refers to a traditional story of a party of ten fools who were travelling together. They had to cross a river and on reaching the other shore wanted to check up whether all of them had got safely across. Each one counted in turn, but each one counted the nine others and forgot himself. So they thought the tenth man had been drowned and began to mourn him. Just then a traveller came past and asked them what was the matter. He at once saw the cause of their mistake and in order to convince them he made them walk past him one by one, giving each one a blow as he passed and telling them to count the strokes.

[2] *Sanchita*, *agami* and *prarabdha*.

Supplement to the Forty Verses

INVOCATORY

1. *That in which this entire universe is established, to which it pertains, out of which it arises, for which it exists, by which it comes into being, and which it really is — that is the Self-existent Reality, the Truth. Let us worship That in the heart.*

THE TEXT

1. *By association with the Sages attachment (to material things) is removed. When this is removed the attachment of the mind also vanishes. Those who have got rid of their attachment of mind become one with That which is motionless. They become Liberated even while alive. Seek their company.*

2. *That Supreme State which is to be attained here through association with Sages and steady inward-turning cannot be obtained through a (merely) learned teacher or by (understanding) the meaning of sacred texts, or by merit or by any other means.*

3. *If one associates with Sages where is the need for all these methods of discipline? When a pleasant breeze from the south is blowing, of what use, tell me, is a fan?*

4. *Heat is allayed by the cool (light of the) moon, poverty (is removed) by the wish-fulfilling tree and sin by (bathing in) the Ganges. But all three are removed by the peerless benign look of the peerless Sages.*

5. *Neither sacred bathing places consisting of water nor the images of Gods made of stone and clay can equal those*

great ones. They take countless days to purify one, but know that the Sages do so by a mere look.

6. *'Who is God?' 'He who knows the mind.' 'My mind is known by me who am spirit.' 'Therefore you are God; also because scripture declares "God is one".'*

7. *'What provides you with light?' 'By day the sun; by night a lamp.' 'What is the light which sees these lights?' 'The eye.' 'What is the light that illumines the eye?' 'The intellect.' 'What is it which knows the intellect?' 'It is the "I".' 'Therefore you are the light of lights.' When the teacher said this (the disciple said), 'Truly I am That.'*

8. In the interior of the heart-cavern the one Brahman shines alone as 'I-I', as the Self (atman). Resort to the heart by diving deep within, through Self-enquiry or by subduing the mind along with the breath. You will thus become established in the heart.[1]

9. *Know that awareness of, and remaining as, the Pure, immutable Self in the lotus of the heart bestows Liberation by destroying the ego.*

10. The body is inert like a pot. Since it has no 'I-consciousness' and since, in its absence in deep sleep, we still exist, it cannot be the 'I'. Who is it then that produces the feeling of 'I-ness'? Where is he? In the heart-cavern of

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[1] In 1915 when Bhagavan was living in Virupaksha Cave, a young devotee, Jagadiswara Sastri, wrote on a piece of paper in Sanskrit the words *hridaya kuhara madhye* (in the interior of the heart cavern). He then went out on some business. When he returned he found to his surprise a complete Sanskrit verse beginning with those words and learned that Bhagavan had written it. This verse was later translated into Tamil by Bhagavan and incorporated in the *Supplementary Forty Verses.* Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni also included this verse in his *Sri Ramana Gita.*

those who thus (enquire and) realize, the omnipresent Arunachala Siva shines of his own accord as 'That-am-I' consciousness.

11. He alone is born who, after enquiring 'Where was I born?' is born in his source, which is Brahman. Know that he is ever-born and daily renewed. He is the supreme Sage.

12. Give up the idea that this loathsome body is the Self. Realize the eternally blissful Self. *To seek to know the Self while cherishing the ephemeral body is like mistaking a crocodile for a log and trying to cross the river on it.*

13. Gifts, penance (*tapas*), sacrifice, upright conduct (dharma), self-control (yoga), devotion (bhakti) heaven (the expanse of consciousness), subtance (existence), peace, truth, grace, silence, the Supreme State, deathless death, knowledge, renunciation, Liberation, bliss—know that all these are only severance of the I-am-the-body consicousness.

14. To enquire who it is who has karma, *vibhakti* (lack of devotion), *viyoga* (separation) and *ajnana* (ignorance) is true path of karma, bhakti, yoga and jnana. Remaining as the Self which has none of these things, and without an ego to make the enquiry, is indeed the true state.

15. The attitude of those madmen who, without realizing the Power which animates them, expect to attain all supernatural powers reminds one of the story of the lame man who said, 'If I am supported on my feet what can the enemy do?'

16. Peace of mind is permanent in Liberation, so how can those whose minds are attached to supernatural powers, which cannot be gained without activity of the mind, achieve the bliss of Liberation in which there is a cessation of the activity of the mind?

17. The Lord bears the burden of the world. The pseudo-Self which thinks it bears it is like the grinning sculptured figure (at the foot of a temple tower) which seems to support it. Whose fault is it if one who travels in a cart carries his luggage on his head to his own discomfort instead of putting it in the cart which carries it anyway?

18. *Between the two breasts, below the chest and above the abdomen, there are six organs of different colours. One of these resembles the bud of a water lily inside and is situated two digits to the right. This is the (spiritual) heart.*

19. *It is inverted and within it is a tiny orifice in which dwells dense darkness (ignorance) along with desires, etc. All the great psychic nerves* (nadis) *depend upon it. It is the abode of the vital forces* (pranas), *the mind and the light (of consciousness)*.

20. *The Lord who dwells and shines in the lotus of the heart is worshipped as Guhesa (Lord of the Cave). When, by continued effort, the conviction 'I am that Guhesa' becomes as firm as the sense of 'I' in your body and you become that Lord, nescience of the form 'I am the perishable body, will disappear like darkness at sunrise.*

21. *"Please explain to me what is that great mirror in which the whole world is reflected. What is the heart of all individuals in the world?", Rama once asked Sage Vasishta. The latter replied: "When one thinks about it it appears that the heart of all individuals in the world is twofold.*

22. *"Listen to the characteristics of these two, of which one is to be accepted and the other rejected. The organ which is called the heart which is situated in a particular place inside the chest of the physical body is to be rejected. The heart which is of the form of consciousness is what is*

to be accepted. It is both within and without; yet it has no inside or outside.

23. *"This is the important (spiritual) heart. All this is situated within it. It is the mirror of all things and the abode of all wealth. Therefore, it is said that consciousness alone is the heart of all beings. It is not a small part of the perishable body which is insentient like a stone.*

24. *"Therefore, the practice of merging the ego in that pure heart of the nature of consciousness, leads to stilling the vital air (vayu) and the latent impressions of the mind (vasanas).*

25. *"Through constant, uninterrupted meditation in the heart: 'That consciousness which is devoid of all adjuncts, that Siva, I am' removes all attachments from the mind.*

26. *"Having understood the various states and always holding firmly at heart to the supreme state which is above them and free from delusion play your part in the world (as on a stage). O hero! Having realized in the Heart that which underlies all appearances, never forget it. Then play your (allotted) part in the world, O hero, acting as though attached to it.*

27. *"With simuldted zeal and joy, excitement and hatred, initiative and effort play your part in the world without attachment, O hero. Having obtained release from all kinds of bondage, having gained equanimity in all situations and performing outward actions according to your part, O hero, play your part as you like in the world."*

28. *Proclaim that he who is established in Truth through knowledge of the Self and has destroyed the latent impressions of the (five) sense organs through that knowledge, is the fire of knowledge, the possessor of the thunderbolt of knowledge, the destroyer of time, the hero who has overcome death.*

29. *Know that illumination, intelligence and strength develop spontaneously in those who have realized Truth, just as with coming of spring beauty and other qualities embellish the earth.*

30. *The mind whose impressions (vasanas) have been destroyed is not engaged in activity even when it performs actions; it is like those who listen to a story absent-mindedly. The mind which is crowded with them is engaged in activity even when it does not perform actions; it is like one who, while lying still (in sleep), climbs a hill and falls into a pit in his dream.*

31. To one who is sleeping in a cart the movement of the cart, its stopping and its being left alone are the same. (Similarly) to the true Sage who is asleep inside the gross body, activity, contemplation and sleep are (the same).

32. Beyond the reach of those who experience the waking, dream and sleep states there is a state of waking-sleep known as *turiya* (literally ‘ the fourth ’, meaning transcendental experience). As that state alone is real and as the (other) three which appear are unreal, know that *turiya* is itself *turiyatita* (beyond *turiya*).

33. *If one says that the Sage is free from the accumulated karma from past actions (sanchita) and the karma now being made (agami) but is subject to the karma that is to be worked out in this life (prarabdha) that is only to satisfy others who ask about it. Know that just as none of a man's wives can remain unwidowed on his death so when the doer is gone none of the three forms of karma can survive.*

34. *Wives, children and others form the family of the unlearned, but know that in the minds of the learned there*

are not one but many families consisting of books, and these form obstacles to their spiritual progress.

35. What is the use of learning for those who do not seek the source of their birth and attempt to erase the writ of Fate ?[1] They are like a gramophone. Tell me, Lord of Sonagiri (Arunachala), what else are they ?

36. Those who are not learned are saved from the misfortune of those who have learning but no humility. They are saved from the clutches of the monster of pride, as well as from the disease of wandering thoughts and words, and from running about seeking wealth and fame. Know it is not from one evil alone that they are saved.

37. *Though he may reject all the worlds and have all the scriptures at his finger tips, it is hard for one who is enthralled by the vile courtesan flattery to free himself from bondage.*

38. Who is there besides the Self ? What does it matter whether one is praised or blamed ? Without differentiating between oneself and others and without swerving from one's natural state, one should abide as the Self.

39. *Retain at heart always the sense of non-duality, but never express it in action. My son, the sense of non-duality may apply to the three worlds, but it is not to be used towards the Guru.*

40. *I will proclaim truly the essence of the conclusion arrived at by all the Vedantic texts. It is that if the ego dies and the 'I' becomes That (Brahman), that 'I' which is of the form of consciousness alone remains.*

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[1] This refers to the conception of the letters of a man's destiny written on his forehead. To wipe out the letters is to transcend one's destiny or karma.

7

Five Verses on the Self

These are the last verses composed by Bhagavan. They were written at the instance of a devotee, Smt. Suri Nagamma, the author of *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam.* He wrote them first in Telugu, but to a Tamil metrical form called *venba* and then translated them into Tamil. Since there was already a composition of Sankaracharya called the *Atma Panchakam*, Bhagavan decided to call his composition *Ekatma Panchakam.*

o o o o

1. He who is forgetful of the Self, mistaking the physical body for it, and goes through innumerable births, is like one who wanders all over the world in a dream. Thus realizing the Self would only be like waking up from the dream-wanderings.

2. One who asks himself 'Who am I?' and 'Where am I?', though existing all the while as the Self, is like a drunken man who enquires about his own identity and whereabouts.

3. While in fact the body is in the Self, he who thinks that the Self is within the insentient body is like one who considers the cloth of the screen which supports a cinema picture to be contained within the picture.

4. Does an ornament exist apart from the gold of which it is made? Where is the body apart from the Self? He who considers the body to be himself is an ignorant man. He who regards himself as the Self is the Enlightened One who has realized the Self.

5. The One Self, the Sole Reality, alone exists eternally. When even the Ancient Teacher, Dakshinamurti, revealed It through speechless eloquence, who else could convey it by speech?

8

Miscellaneous Verses

i

THE SONG OF THE *POPPADUM*

In 1914 or 1915, Bhagavan was living in the Virupaksha cave with his mother who lived with him and did most of the cooking. He himself was a skilled cook and both then and later often helped to prepare the food. On one occasion his mother was making *poppadum*, a thin round cake made of black gram flour fried crisp, and she called him to help her. Instead of doing so, however, he composed this poem giving instruction for spiritual development under the symbolism of making *poppadum*.

* * *

No need about the world to roam
And suffer from depression;
Make *poppadum* within the home
According to the lesson
Of 'THOU ART THAT', without compare
The Unique Word,[1] unspoken,
'Tis not by speech it will declare.
The silence is unbroken
Of Him who is the Adept-Sage,

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[1] i.e. Stillness is paradoxically the speech of the Eternal Spirit.

The great Apotheosis,
With His eternal heritage
That Being-Consciousness-Bliss is.

Make *poppadum* and after making fry,
Eat, so your cravings you may satisfy.

The grain which is the black gram's yield.
The so-called self or ego,
Grown in the body's fertile field
Of five-fold sheaths,[1] put into
The roller-mill made out of stone,
Which is the search for Wisdom,
The 'Whom am I?' 'Tis thus alone
The Self will gain its freedom.
Thus must be crushed to finest dūst
And ground up into fragments
As being the non-self, so must
We shatter our attachments.

Make *poppadum*. . . .

Mix in the juice of square-stemmed vine,
This is association
With Holy Men. With this combine
Within the preparation
Some cummin-seed of mind-control
And pepper of restraining
The wayward senses, with them roll
That salt which is remaining

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[1] The Hindu philosophical doctrines recognize the existence of subtler bodies of the human being, each functioning in a finer realm. The five sheaths mentioned in the text are included in the three human bodies — material, subtle, and causal. These sheaths are: the physical, vital, mental, intellectual, and blissful sheaths. For a description see the *Vivekachudamani*.

Indifferent to the world we see,
With condiment of leanings
Towards a virtuous unity.
These are their different meanings.
Make poppadum. . . .
The mixture into dough now blend
And on the stone then place it
Of mind, by tendencies hardened,
And without ceasing baste it
With heavy strokes of the 'I-I'
Delivered with the pestle
Of introverted mind. Slowly
The mind will cease to wrestle.
Then roll out with the pin of peace
Upon the slab of Brahman.
Continue effort without cease.
With energetic élan.
Make poppadum. . . .
The *poppadum* or soul's now fit
To put into the fry-pan,
The one infinite symbol it
Of the great Silence, which can
Be first prepared by putting in
Some clarified fresh butter
Of the Supreme, And now begin
To heat it till it sputter,
On Wisdom's self-effulgent flame
Fry *poppadum*, 'I', as That.
Enjoying all alone the same;
Which bliss we ever aim at
Make *poppadum* of self and after eat;
Of Perfect Peace then you will be replete.

ii

Self Knowledge

ATMA-VIDYA

Self-knowledge is an easy thing,
The easiest thing there is.
The Self is something that's entirely real
Even for the most ordinary man,
It could be said that a clear gooseberry[1]
Is an illusion by comparison.

The Self, which shines as Sun within the Heart,
Is real and all-pervading. 'Twill reveal
Itself as soon as false thought is destroyed
And not one speck remains. For this thought is
The cause of the appearance of false forms,
The body and the world, which seem to be
Real things in spite of Self, which steadfast stands.

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[1] The fruit mentioned in the Tamil text is the *nelli*, widely grown in India but unknown in Europe. It is more or less transparent and hence "as clear as the nelli in one's hand" is the Tamil equivalent to the English saying: "as clear as crystal".

The ever-changeless, firm as Truth itself.
When Self shines forth darkness will be dispersed,
Affliction cease and Bliss alone remain.

The thought 'I am the body' is the string
On which are threaded diverse thoughts like beads.
Therefore on diving deep upon the quest
'Who am I and from whence?' thoughts disappear
And consciousness of Self then flashes forth
As the 'I-I' within the cavity
Of every seeker's Heart. And this is Heaven,
This is that Stillness, the abode of Bliss.

What is the use of knowing everything
Except the Self? What else is there to know
For anyone when Self, Itself, is known?
On realizing in oneself the Self,
Which is the only self-effulgent One
In myriads of selves, the Light of Self
Will clearly shine within. This is indeed
The true display of Grace, the ego's death,
And the unfolding of the Bliss Supreme.

In order that the bonds of destiny
And all its kindred may at last be loosed,
And so that one may also be released
From the dread cycle of both birth and death,
This path than others is far easier,
Therefore be still and keep a silent hold
On tongue and mind and body. That which is
The Self-effulgent will arise within.
This is the Supreme Experience. Fear will cease.
This is the boundless sea of Perfect Bliss!

Annamalai,[1] the Transcendental One,
That is the Eye behind the eye of mind,
Which eye and other senses cognize,
Which in their turn illuminate the Sky,
And all the other elements as well,
That is again the Spirit-sky in which
The mind-sky doth appear, That shines within
The Heart which is of every thought quite free,
And with gaze fixed within remains as That;
Annamalai, the Self-effulgent shines.
But Grace[2] is needed most. So faithful be
Unto the Self and Bliss will then result.

---

[1] This Tamil name is a word meaning "insurmountable hill" and is here used to address and signify the Inner Self, which is beyond the reach of thought and word.

[2] i.e. Grace coming from an Adept-Sage is necessary as a prerequisite to obtain such illuminating experience.

iii

Verses on the Celebrations of Bhagavan's Birthday

Bhagavan was born on December 29, 1879. His birthday, however, is observed according to the Tamil (solar) Calendar in *Dhanurmasa* when the Moon is with the Star *Punarvasu*. According to the Western calendar this day falls in the months of December-January. It was one of the great annual festivals at the Ashram and still is. When first it was proposed to celebrate it, however, he protested and composed the following poem. But his disciples began to celebrate it.

* * * *

'You who wish to celebrate the birthday, seek first whence was your birth. One's true birthday is when he enters That which transcends birth and death — the Eternal Being.

At least on one's birthday one should mourn one's entry into this world (*samsara*). To glory in it and celebrate it is like delighting in and decorating a corpse. To seek one's Self and merge in the Self : that is wisdom.'

iv

Complaint of the Stomach

One day there had been feasting at the Ashram. Many had been upset by the large quantity of rich food. Someone quoted the following complaint about the stomach by the Tamil poet Avvayar :

* * * *

'You will not go without food even for one day, nor will you take enough for two days at a time. You have no idea of the trouble I have on your account, Oh wretched stomach ! It is impossible to get on with you !'

* * * *

Bhagavan immediately replied with a parody giving the stomach's complaint against the ego.

* * * *

'You will not give even an hour's rest to me, your stomach. Day after day, every hour, you keep on eating. You have no idea how I suffer, Oh trouble-making ego ! It is impossible to get on with you !'

V

Nine Stray Verses

An old devotee, Somasundara Swami once begged Bhagavan to write in his note-book at least an *akshara* (a single word). An *akshara* means also undecaying and denoted Brahman. Bhagavan wrote a short epigram on the difficulty of writing down the *aksharam*. This is the first verse below. The remaining verses were written at odd times by Bhagavan and included in some of the poems of Muruganar. The order used here was suggested by Bhagavan.

* * * *

1

One syllable shines for ever in the heart as Self.
Who is there anywhere who can write it down?

2

Incantation reaching to the source of sound is the best course for those who are not firm in Consciousness which is the source of the I.

3

This excreta-making body for Self he who mistakes
Is worse than one who, born a pig, for food excreta takes.

4

Incessant search for Self the love supreme of God we call. For He alone as Self abides within the Heart of all.

5

What introverted mind calls Peace outside as power is shown;
Those who have reached and found this Truth their Unity have known.

6

He who's contented with his lot, from jealousy is free;
Balanced in affluence and mishap; not bound by action he.

7

By him alone who's saved himself can other folk be freed;
The help of others is as if the blind the blind would lead.

8

Question and answer are of speech, duality their sphere;
Impossible in Monism to find them anywhere.

9

There is neither creation nor destruction, neither destiny nor free-will,
Neither path nor achievement; this is the final truth.

vi

Apology to Hornets

One day when Bhagavan was climbing the Hill he knocked against a hornets' nest and was attacked and very badly stung in the leg and thigh. He felt remorse for having disturbed them. Asked why he met with such harsh treatment for what had happened accidentally, he replied :

* * * *

When I was stung by hornets in revenge
Upon the leg until it was inflamed,
Although it was by chance I stepped upon
Their nest, constructed in a leafy bush ;
What kind of mind is his if he does not
At least repent for doing such a wrong ?

vii

Reply to the Mother

When Bhagavan left home his family tried to trace him but at first without success. Only some years later they discovered him at Tiruvannamalai. The Mother, not yet ripe to renounce the world and join him, went to try to persuade him to return to her. At this time he was not speaking, so he wrote briefly that whatever is destined to happen will happen. A poetical rendering of his reply is given below.

* * * *

The fates of souls are all by God ordained
According to the deeds that they have done.
That end that's destined ne'er to be attained
Will never be achieved by anyone
However hard they try. All those things, too,
That it is destined must occur one day,
Will come to pass whatever you may do
To interfere and try their course to stay,
And this is certain. At length we come to see
That it is best that we should silent be.

viii

For the Mother's Recovery

In 1914 Bhagavan's mother paid a brief visit to him at Tiruvannamalai. While there she had a severe attack of fever, which some thought to be typhoid. Her life was despaired of and Bhagavan composed the following poem for her recovery. Needless to say, she recovered. Two years later she came and took up her abode permanently at Bhagavan's ashram on the hill.

* * * *

Oh Lord, Hill of my refuge, who curest the ills of recurrent births, it is for Thee to cure my mother's fever.

Oh God who slayest death! Reveal Thy feet in the Heart-Lotus of her who bore me to take refuge at Thy Lotus-Feet, and shield her from death. What is death if scrutinized?

Arunachala, Thou blazing fire of Knowledge! Enfold my mother in Thy Light and make her one with Thee. What need then for cremation?[1]

Arunachala, Dispeller of illusion! Why dost Thou delay to dispel my mother's delirium?[2] Is there any but Thee to watch as a Mother over one who has sought refuge in Thee and to rescue from the tyranny of *karma*?

---

[1] In India the body of the Sage is buried after death, whereas others are cremated. Having passed through the fire during life, he does not need to do so again after death. The Mother attained Liberation before death and was buried, as this verse foresees.

[2] By delirium is meant not merely the physical fever but the I-am-the-body" illusion.

ix

Arunachala Ramana

A devotee named Amritanatha Yati wrote on a paper a Malayalam verse imploring Bhagavan to say whether he was Hari (Vishnu) or Sivaguru (Subramanya) or Yativara (Siva) or Vararuchi. Bhagavan wrote his reply in the same Malayalam metre on the same paper. A translation of them are given below.

* * * *

In the recesses of the lotus-shaped hearts of all, beginning with Vishnu, there shines as pure intellect (Absolute Consciousness) the *Paramatman* who is the same as Arunachala Ramana. When the mind melts with love of Him, and reaches the inmost recess of the Heart wherein He dwells as the Beloved, the subtle eye of pure intellect opens and He reveals Himself as Pure Consciousness.

X

The Self in the Heart

This is a poetical version of the eighth stanza of the *Supplementary Forty Verses*. The circumstance in which it was written are explained in the foot-note to that stanza.

* * * *

In the inmost core, the Heart
Shines as Brahman alone,
As 'I-I', the Self aware.
Enter deep into the Heart
By search for Self, or diving deep,
With breath under check.
Thus abide ever in Atman.

(*Ramana Gita*, ch. II, v. 2)

xi

Sleep While Awake

Deep sleep can e'er be had while wide awake
By search for Self. In dream and waking states
Pursue the quest for Self without a break
So long sleep's ignorance them permeates.

xii

Occasional Verses

1

TIRUCHUZHI

Siva unique, the light supreme that shines
unceasing in comely Tiruchuzhi, Self that dances
in unbroken bliss in devotees' hearts, bestow on me
your grace and shine as Heart within my heart.

2

VIRUPAKSHA CAVE

The formless and imperishable Real stands
revealed in my Aruna Hill, the embodied
Presence of the three-eyed God. Since the
cave named Virupaksha sustains the very devotees
who dwell within the Heart-cave of that God,
well may we call it Mother.

3

A devotee desired to have a Tamil version of a stanza on God Subrahmanya with the substitution of Ramana for the God's name. Sri Bhagavan wrote the following :

The destroyer of the darkness of ignorance
in the virtuous, the dweller in the cave, the

immeasurable One compact of light, the sun eternal,
the wielder of the javelin of Awareness,
this Ramana in the Heart-cave, let us adore.

4-5

Two stanzas which form the invocation to the hymn of 108 names addressed to Sri Bhagavan (*Ramana Ashtottara Satanamastotra*) were rendered into the following verses :

Let us meditate in the heart on Ramana, the
boundless ocean of Being-Awareness-Bliss of which
the universe is but a wave, the steadfast One
established firmly in the heart-cave's depth,
free from distracting thought.

To you who gained new birth by remembering
the feet of Arunachala-Siva and, swept away
by the vast, swelling tide of His grace divine,
became Himself, to you who dwelling in the heart
as sole monarch purify the world by constant *tapas,*
to you, Sri Ramana, the world-transcending light,
we offer adoration.

6

VISHNU

Whenever *dharma* wanes and *adharma* waxes,
you take birth for sustaining virtue and the
virtuous and laying low all wickedness. Thus
you renew earth-life, mysterious One. Who then
are we to conceive your form ?

7-8

DIPAVALI

The following two verses explain the significance of Dipavali (or the festival of lights):

The day that Narayana grinds to death the
naraka-ego in the quern of knowledge, inquiring
whence the *naraka*-I rises to rule the *naraka*-world
that day is the high festival of Naraka-Chaturdasi.

To search and slay the sinner, the *naraka*-ego
corrupted by the thought that one is the *naraka*-form,
the false body-tenement, and to shine as
the true Self, this is Dipavali indeed.

9-10

FROM THE *RAMA GITA*

Two stanzas of the *Rama Gita* were rendered into Tamil verses by Sri Bhagavan.

Whether sinking or rising, whether coming or going
through action, the body is fleeting.
The self-realized *siddha* is as oblivious of his
body as a man dead drunk is of his clothes.

Even the conjurer deludes the world, but is not
himself deluded. How strange would it be if the
siddha himself is deluded and adds to the delusion
of the world.

11

CAUSE AND EFFECT

He whose action is the nature of men,
women and the rest of living beings, He whose
glance is the First cause of the world,
the dweller in the mind of Gods, the Lord who destroys
and creates the universe, this Lord regard as Hara.

12-13

MIRACLE OF DAKSHINAMURTI

Who is the youthful guru beneath the banyan
tree ? Very old are the pupils who seek him.
The handsome teacher's speech is silence.
Cleared are all the pupils' doubts.

Under the wonderful banyan tree shines the
youthful guru. Aged pupils come to him. Silence
is this teacher's speech. Gone are the doubts in
the pupils' minds.

14

This was written in Sri Bhagavan's last days.

As one lets go the leaf after eating the
food, the seer sheds his body.

15

THE SELF

If one realizes one's true nature within one's
heart, it is the plenitude of Being-Awareness-Bliss
without beginning or end.

16

THE COW LAKSHMI

On Saturday, the fifth of Ani in the year
Sarvadhari, the twelfth day of the waxing moon
under the asterism Visakha, the cow Lakshmi
attained mukti.

17

To Ishwara Swami who wanted to know the names of Sri Bhagavan's home town and parents :

The mind and heart of the true seer cannot
leave and can only emerge from the sunset-
coloured One. However, my father was Sundara,
of tree-surrounded Tiruchuzhi and my mother
was Alagamma, the worshipper of His Feet.

18

To Ishwara Swami's questions about the names of Hara and Uma in the local shrine :

The dancing deity in Tiruchuzhi on Pavahari
is Bhumisa and His consort Sahayamba.

19

To a question why the marks of Muruga are not visible in Ramana :

The javelin, the bright eastern hill, the Mother's
milk of grace, the twelve arms, the big blue
peacock mind-beguiling, all these are there in
the measure that one lives in the world in fear
of Ramana the Mother (in fear of Ramana's mother).

20

LIBERATION

The dove escaping from the hunter's hand
escapes too from the forest, it is said. When
the hunter hunting for the 'I' gains freedom,
the forest shrinks into a home.

21

SILENCE

The state of grace is the speech that rises
in the heart of silence.

22

ONE LETTER

All the letters in this book add up to a
single, imperishable letter. This as written
you have read. The single letter shines for
ever of its own accord within the heart. Who
can hope to write it?

PART TWO

Adaptations and Translations

9

The Song Celestial

Bhagavan was speaking once with a visiting pandit about the great merits of the Bhagavad Gita, when a devotee complained that it was difficult to keep all the 700 verses in mind and asked if there was not one verse that could be remembered as the quintessence of the Gita. Bhagavan thereupon mentioned Chapter X, verse 20 : 'I am the Self, Oh Gudakesa, dwelling in the Heart of every being ; I am the beginning and the middle and also the end of all beings.' Later he selected 42 verses that here follow (of which that quoted above comes fourth) and arranged them in an appropriate order to serve as guidance. He prepared also Tamil and Malayalam versions of these verses.

* * * *

Sanjaya said :

1. To him (Arjuna) thus filled with compassion and in despair, his eyes distressed and full of tears, spoke Madhusudana these words : ii : 1

The Blessed Lord said :

2. This body, Oh son of Kunti,[1] is called the *kshetra* (field); Him who knows it, the Sages call, the *kshetrajna* (Knower of the field). xiii : 1

3. Know Me also as the Knower of the field in all the fields, Oh Bharata[1] : knowledge of the field and of the Knower of the field I deem to be true Knowledge. xiii : 2

4. I am the Self, Oh Gudakesa,[1] dwelling in the Heart of every being ; I am the beginning and the middle and also the end of all beings. x : 20

---

[1] Other names for Arjuna.

5. Of those born the death is certain, and certain the birth of those dead: therefore for what none can prevent thou shouldst not grieve. ii : 27

6. Never is He born nor does He die; nor, having been, ceaseth He any more to be: unborn, abiding, eternal, ancient, He is not slain when the body is slain. ii : 20

7. Not to be cleft is He, not to be burnt is He, not even to be wetted nor yet to be dried is He: abiding He is and all-pervading, stable, immovable, and everlasting. ii : 24

8. Know That to be indestructible whereby all this is pervaded; of this Immutable none can work destruction. ii : 17

9. There is no existence of the unreal and no non-existence of the Real. The truth of both these statements is seen by Seers of the Essence. ii : 16

10. As ether everywhere present is not polluted by virtue of its subtlety, even so the Self abiding everywhere is not polluted in the body. xiii : 33

11. Nor sun nor moon nor fire illumines It: and whither having gone men return not, That is My Supreme Abode. xv : 6

12. Unmanifested, Imperishable is this called; and this they proclaim the Supreme State, from which when once attained they return not, That is My Supreme Abode. viii : 21

13. Without pride, without delusion, victorious over the blemish of attachment, ever abiding in the Self, their desires abandoned, released from the pairs called pleasure and pain, they go undeluded to that Immutable Abode. xv : 5

14. He who forsakes the ordinances of the Scriptures, and acts under the influence of desire, attains not perfection, nor happiness, nor the Supreme State. xvi : 23

15. He who sees the Supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, perishing not as they perish, he it is who sees aright. xiii : 27

16. By devotion alone, without 'otherness', Oh Arjuna, can I be known and seen and in essence entered, Oh Parantapa.[1] xi : 54

17. The faith of every man, Oh Bharata, accords with his essential character; man is instinct with faith: as that wherein a man has faith, so is he. xvii : 3

18. He that has intense faith, and to that faith being devoted has the senses controlled, gains Knowledge; and having gained Knowledge he swiftly attains Supreme Peace. iv : 39

19. To those who are self-attuned and who worship Me with loving devotion I give that union with understanding whereby they come to Me. x : 10

20. Out of compassion for them and abiding in their Self I destroy with the resplendent Light of Knowledge their darkness born of ignorance. x : 11

21. In those in whom ignorance is destroyed by Knowledge of the Self, Knowledge like the sun illumines That Supreme. v : 16

22. High, they say, are the senses; higher than the senses is the mind; and higher than the mind is the understanding; but one who is higher than understanding is He. iii : 42

23. Thus knowing Him to be higher than the understanding, steadying the self by the Self, Oh thou strong of

---

[1] Arjuna.

arm, slay the enemy in the form of desire, so hard to overcome. iii : 43

24. Just as a burning fire makes ashes of its fuel, Oh Arjuna, even so does the Fire of Knowledge make ashes of all works. iv : 37

25. Him whose every enterprise is without desire or motive, whose actions are burnt up in the Fire of Knowledge, the wise call a Sage. iv : 19

26. All round the austere Sages, free from desire and wrath, who have subdued their mind and have realized the Self radiates the beatific Peace of Brahman. v : 26

27. Little by little one should realize tranquillity, by judgment with a steadfast purpose ; making the mind abide in the Self, one should think of nothing at all. vi : 25

28. Towards whatsoever the mind wanders, being fickle and unsteady, therefrom it should be withdrawn and brought under the sway of the Self alone. vi : 26

29. The saint who devoutly seeks Liberation, with the senses, mind, and intellect subdued, without desire, fear, or wrath, is indeed ever Liberated. v : 28

30. He who is steadfast in yoga and looks on everything impartially, sees the Self dwelling in all beings, and all beings in the Self. vi : 29

31. I undertake to secure and protect the welfare of those who without ' otherness ' meditate on Me and worship Me, and who ever abide thus attuned. ix : 22

32. Of these the *Jnani*, who is ever attuned, whose devotion is centred in One, is the most excellent ; because to the *Jnani* I am exceedingly dear and he is dear to Me. vii : 17

33. At the end of many births the *Jnani* finds refuge in Me, recognizing that Vasudeva is all. Such a high Soul is very hard to find. vii : 19

34. When one puts away, Oh Partha, all the desires that are in the mind, and in the Self alone, by the Self, is well satisfied, then is one called a man of steadfast Wisdom. ii : 55

35. That man attains Peace who, having cast away all desires, remains without longing, devoid of 'I' and 'mine'. ii : 71

36. He by whom the world is not disturbed, and who is not disturbed by the world, free from exultation, impatience, fright, and agitation—he is dear to me. xii : 15

37. He who holds honour and dishonour equal, equal the friendly party and the foe, who has renounced all enterprise—he is said to have transcended the gunas. xiv : 25

38. The man who revels here and now in the Self alone, with the Self is satisfied, and in the Self alone is content—for him there is no work to do. iii : 17

39. For him there is no purpose either in doing work or in leaving it undone; nor is there in all beings anything which serves him as a purpose. iii : 18

40. Content to take what chance may bring, having transcended the pairs of opposites, free from ill-will and even-minded in success or failure, though he works he is not bound. iv : 22

41. The Lord, Oh Arjuna, dwells in the Heart of every being and His mysterious power spins round all beings set on the wheel. xviii : 61

42. To Him alone surrender Oh Bharata, with all thy being; by His Grace shalt thou obtain Peace Supreme, the Abode Eternal. xviii : 62

10

Translations from the Agamas

The Agamas are traditional Hindu scriptures regarded as no less authoritative and authentic than the Vedas. They are regarded as divinely revealed teachings and no human authorship is ascribed to them. Temple worship is mainly founded upon them.

There are twenty-eight *Agamas* that are accepted as authorities. From among them *Sarva Jnanottara* and *Devikalottara* are outstanding as expressing the standpoint of pure Advaita or non-duality. *Atma-Sakshatkara* is the most essential part of *Sarva Jnanottara*.

The Maharshi spontaneously translated both these Agamas into Tamil verse, *Devikalottara* in the very early days when he was living in Virupaksha Cave and the *Atma-Sakshatkara* in 1933 when he was already in the Ashram at the foot of the hill. Both are instructions in the Path of Knowledge given by Lord Siva, the latter to his son Guha (another name for Lord Subramania) and the former to his wife, Parvati.

Verses 70-72 in *Devikalottara*, forbidding the harming even of plant life, are not to be taken as applying to aspirants on the path. No extremes of discipline or behaviour are demanded of them. Indeed, as is generally indicated in these two *Agamas*, questions of discipline, ritual, and behaviour are far less important on this path than any other, since it is a path which works directly on the heart, awakening spiritual knowledge.

i

Atma Sakshatkara

(ALL-COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE)

BENEDICTORY VERSE

(OF SRI BHAGAVAN)

Atma-Sakshatkara which was taught by *Ishvara*, the Self (of all) to (his son) Guha is now propounded in Tamil by the same lord, the dweller within me, the Ancient and the Supreme.

o o o o

TEXT

1 and 2. I will tell you, Oh Guha! another method by means of which even the unqualified, impalpable, subtle and immament Absolute can be clearly realized, by which realization the wise become themselves Siva. This has not hitherto been expounded to any other. Now listen!

3. It has been transmitted through a line of Gurus, but is still not explained by the different systems of philosophy. Its purpose is to rescue one from the bonds of *samsara*. It is transcendental and applicable to all.

4 and 5. 'I am He who is immanent in all, the soul of all found everywhere, of the nature of the fundamentals, incomprehensible, ruling over all, beyond the fundamentals, beyond speech and mind, and without a name.' Such should be the worship, keeping the mind at the same time perfectly composed.

6 and 7. That which is unqualified, absolute Knowledge, eternal, steady, infinite, indescribable, being no effect of a precedent cause, without parallel and without form, undecaying, calm, transcending the senses, unmanifested, and yet ascertained without a doubt, is I myself.

8. I am certainly the Supreme God whose very being is all the *mantras* and who transcends them and extends beyond creation and destruction.

9. I permeate all this—visible and invisible, mobile and immobile, I am surely the Lord of all and from me all shine forth.

10. This Universe including the worlds and divided into several shapes, from *Shakti* down to the Earth, is all in me.

11. Whatever is seen or heard of in the Universe both within and without, is permeated by me.

12. He who worships, thinking that he is a separate Self from Siva, the Supreme, does so out of ignorance and cannot himself become Siva.

13. Giving up the separate identity of yourself as distinct from Siva, meditate constantly on the non-dual unity : 'I am He who is known as Siva.'

14. One who is established in the contemplation of non-dual unity will abide in the Self of everyone and realize the immanent, all-pervading One. There is no doubt of this.

15. He has perfect Wisdom who is a *yogi* firmly established in non-duality and free from thoughts.

16. The Self who is in the scriptures described as the unborn Lord, without form or qualities, is my Self. There is no doubt of this.

17. He who is not aware of the Self is an animal subject to creation, preservation and destruction, whereas he who is ever aware is Siva, eternal and pure. There is no doubt of this.

18. Carefully distinguishing the transcendental from the commonplace, the subtle from the gross, the Self must always be investigated into and realized by the vigilant.

19. The transcendental is the Highest and is also *Nirvana*, whereas the commonplace is subject to creation. *Mantras* represent the gross side whereas meditation represents the subtle side.

20 and 21. Oh Shadanana! (Six-Faced God) What is the use of putting it in so many words? Multiplicity of form exists only in the Self and the forms are externalized by the confused mind; they are objectively created simultaneously with thoughts of them.

22. Knowledge of the Self has thus been stated briefly to you, knowing which one realizes that everything is Atma only.

23. There is no place for gods, vedas, sacrifices, or gifts in this scheme. Become established in Realization of the Self which is pure and all-embracing.

24. For such as are submerged in the Ocean of destiny and desire protection there is no refuge anywhere except through Knowledge of the Self.

25. He who becomes established as the Self and realizes clearly is liberated without any effort on his part, even though he may be engaged in activity.

26. There is no gain higher than the Self. Realize that Self which is beyond the ego.

27. He is neither *prana* nor *aprana,* nor any organ or sense. Meditate on the Self who is eternal, perfect, and all-wise.

28. Concentrate the mind neither within, nor without, nor far, nor near, but on pure Transcendence.

29. Realize the Self always to be neither above nor below, nor on either side, nor without nor within, but to be eternal and shining beyond the sublime void.

30. Realize the Self as pervading and subsisting in the void and in the non-void, as different from both void and non-void, not as intermediate between them, nor as partly void and partly non-void.

31. Realize the Self to be undefiled, unsupported, beyond caste, creed, name, or form, uncontaminated, and unqualified.

32. Realize the Self to be without abode, unsupported, immeasurable, unparalleled, inherently pure, and eternal.

33. Renouncing all activities, desireless and not associated in any manner, abiding in the Self, one should meditate on the Self with the Self and in the Self.

34. Let the wise man meditate on the Self after divesting himself of the ideas of place, caste, creed, and duties pertaining thereto.

35. This is the *mantra* to repeat ; this is the *devata* to worship ; this is meditation ; this is penance ; *to eradicate all thoughts and seek the Self.*

36. Making the meditation abstract and without physical support and fixing the mind on the Self, remain unagitated by thoughts.

37. It is not something that can be thought of, nor anything that cannot be thought of ; it is both thought and

non-thought. Realize the Self which is not attached in any manner.

38 & 39. Not allowing the mind to cling to anything, engage always in what transcends thought. Such happiness as is found in the state of void and of purity is also inherent in the Self, undistracted, unimaginable, not the result of any antecedent cause; it is also unparalleled. It is said to be the best, the highest, and peerless.

40. Undistracted by the senses, liberate the mind from its functions. When it transcends itself, the highest bliss results.

41. Yoga is to be unceasingly practised wherever one may be. There is no difference in *Jnana* whatever be the caste or status of the person.

42. Just as milk is uniformly white though drawn from cows of different colours, so also Realization is uniform for all persons of whatever denomination.

43. Brahman is everywhere, immanent in all, and all-pervading. There are no qualifications. Hence do not heed the particulars but concentrate on absolute Brahman.

44. There is nothing for him to accomplish; therefore he reaps no fruits of his actions, nor is he obliged to be active. There is no distinctive caste, creed, or code of conduct for one inhering in the Supreme Self.

45 & 46. However engaged and in whatever environment he may be, he who is established in the Self is always in repose; and he who is content with the Self is always pure.

47. 'Though moving, I do not come or go, for there is no motion for me. I was not born nor shall ever be

reborn ; for I am not concerned with what pertains to the body.

48. 'The actions are of the body, and the body is the result of actions. I do not act in any way nor am I associated with the body.' Thus thinks the perfect, regenerated one.

49. 'Further the body is no bondage for me, for I am ever-free ; the physical accompaniments can never affect the Self.'

50. Just as light shines, dispelling darkness, so also the Supreme Self shines, dispelling ignorance.

51. Just as a lamp spontaneously goes out if not fed with oil, so also the ego becomes extinct if one meditates unceasingly and becomes merged in the Self. There is no higher gain than the Self.

52. When a pot is moved from place to place the space inside it appears to move too but the movement pertains to the pot and not to the space within. So it is with the soul which corresponds to the space in the pot.

53. When the pot is broken its inner space merges in the outer expanse ; similarly with the death of the gross body the Spirit merges in the Absolute.

54. Thus has the truth been expounded authoritatively by the omniscient and competent Master. So liberate yourself from bondage and be metamorphosed into the Omniscient and Infinite.

55. Turn away from all scriptures ; engage in the pure *yoga* of Self-realization ; being convinced that nothing excels this Supreme Knowledge, hold the mind from straying.

56. Engaged in this way the wise man merges for ever in the impalpable Reality ; he becomes all-pervading, attains Liberation, abides immanent in all — within and without — and wanders at will.

57. Becoming ethereal and pure, he merges in Siva — synonymous with Omniscience, contentment, eternal consciousness, independence, and eternal, undecaying, and infinite power.

58 & 59. No regulations are binding on him such as incantations, worship, ablutions, sacrificial fire, or other disciplinary actions ; he does not reap the fruit of actions — virtuous or otherwise ; there is no ancestor-worship for him ; he need observe no fasts on specified days or occasions, nor need he worry about renunciation, household, or celibacy and their obligations.

60. Drink of the nectar of Siva-Knowledge and conduct yourself as you please. You are the same as Siva in immortality and purity, but not in the power to create, etc.

61. All this is the Truth and nothing but the Truth. Oh Guha ! This is the final Truth. There is nothing else to be known.

62. He who is pure of mind, intellect, and ego, the senses and their perceptions, is pure in fact and finds everything pure as well.

63. Give up walking through fire and bathing in the Ganges and other rivers and in waterfalls ; drink of the nectar of Supreme Siva-Knowledge. Become in the form of the Lord eternally and in all purity. Have done with Creating and roam about at your ease.

ii

Devikalottara

INTRODUCTION BY SRI MAHARSHI

Sri Devikalottara is one of the minor Agamas, and this chapter from it on *Jnana-achara-vichara* is what the Supreme Siva vouchsafed to His beloved — a discourse on the wisdom into which ripe souls in their maturity are initiated and their mode of life. Thus, this work, being the essence of all the Agamas, is a wonderful boat that lifts up and carries to the shore of freedom those souls who are struggling hard for their lives, sinking down and rising in the sea of *samsara* with its rotation of births and deaths. May all aspirants, with its help, desist from their confused rambling, take the direct path pointed out therein and reach that supreme Abode of quiet Bliss.

* * * *

1. Devi : Oh Lord of the Celestials ! Be so gracious as to instruct me in the means of Liberation, in *Jnana* and in the conduct of *Jnanis*, hearing which Liberation may result to all.

2. Ishvara[1] : Oh Fair One ! I shall forthwith describe to you the conduct of *Jnanis*, on account of which they are absolved from all sins and delivered from *samsara*.

---

[1] The name 'Ishvara' means 'God' and can therefore be used, as here, in place of 'Siva'.

3. Even millions of books cannot impart right knowledge to such as are unable to find it in *Kāla Jnana* (this agama).

4. Therefore, let the wise man be fearless, undoubting, free from desire, earnest, resolute, and persevering in *Jnana*, as explained here.

5. Let the aspirant for Liberation behave in an unselfish and kind way and give aid to all, let him undergo penance, and let him study this Agama.

6. He is Brahma, he is Deva, he is Vishnu, he is Indra, he is the six-faced Skanda, he is the Guru of all Devas (Brihaspati), he is the Yogi, and he alone is rich in *tapas*.

7. He alone is learned, he alone fortunate and successful whose mind is no longer unstable as air but is held firm.

8. That is the way to Liberation, that is the highest virtue, that is wisdom, that is strength, and that is the merit of those who seek.

9. The stabilization of the restless mind is the only true pilgrimage, the only alms giving and the only penance.

10. The mind when outgoing is *samsara*; when steady it is *Moksha* (Liberation). Therefore let the mind be held firm by supreme Wisdom.

11. Where there is pure unbroken happiness (in solitude), there is Infinity. Is there a wise man who will not revel in the unshaken, absolute Reality?

12. One who has recoiled from sensual pleasures and devoted himself to undefiled, pure wisdom, is sure to achieve everlasting *Moksha*, even if he does not consciously seek it.

13. The mere consciousness of being as Awareness is itself *Shakti* and all this world is the projection of this

Shakti. The true State of Knowledge is that in which the mind is not attached to this *Shakti*.

14. Recognition of the world as the manifestation of *Shakti* is worship of *Shakti*. Pure knowledge, unrelated to objects, is absolute.

15. Do not waste time meditating on *chakras, nadis, padmas*, or *mantras* of deities, or their forms.

16. If you desire eternal *Moksha* do not engage in Yogic practices or incantations, or anything else of the kind.

17. There is no worship, or prayer, or incantation, or meditation. There is nothing to be known apart from the Self.

18. Outgoing minds forge chains of bondage for themselves. Checking the outgoing mind frees one from misery in the world.

19. There is nothing within or without, up or down, midway or sideways. What is perfect is of all forms, yet without any definite form for itself — and shines in its own Awareness.

20. Since whatever a person sees, thinks of, and seeks to accomplish by his actions influences his destiny, let him meditate on that which is beyond perception, and even imagination.

21. There is in truth no cause, no result, and no action; all that is chimerical. There is no world and no dweller in it.

22. The Universe has no external support, nor is it cognized from without; but as you make it so it becomes.

23. He who meditates not on the ethereal, all-pervading Void, gets entangled in *samsara* like the silkworm in its self-made cocoon.

24. Howsoever born, in whatever genus, there is endless misery for the individual over and over again, in every birth ; in order to avert this one should meditate on the infinite Void.

25. The path has been prescribed only with a view to acquire Knowledge. Turn away from any kind of Yoga involving action, and meditate on the Void.

26. Only those heroes who, with the arrow of Void, have pierced through all regions from the highest to the nethermost, are considered Knowers of this Void.

27. By fixing the wandering mind (more mischievous even than a monkey) in the all-empty Void, one reaches *Nirvana*.

28 & 29. May he enjoy bliss who realizes the Supreme, beatific, formless One, who is all-pervading as ether, manifested as *tattvas* (fundamentals) themselves, but separate from the body, not alloyed with perceptions like 'I am', but pure all-covering awareness.

30. Just as fire is automatically extinguished if not fed with fuel, so does the mind become extinct if not fed with thoughts.

31 & 32. Turn away from confusion, ignorance, delusion, dream, sleep, or wakefulness ; for the Supreme is different from the gross body, from the subtle *prana*, from thought or intellect or ego ; meditate on *Chit* (Consciousness) and become one with it.

33. The mind often strays into reverie or falls asleep ; be vigilant and turn it to its pristine state again and again.

34. When once it becomes steady the mind should be left undisturbed ; nothing should be thought of, only the mind should be stabilized in its original state.

35. The mind seeks attachment and this causes it to wander. Destroy its attachments so as to turn it inward and stabilize it there. Do not disturb it when there.

36. Just as space is unaffected by contact with the elements, similarly one's Primal State is unaffected by contact with objects. Meditate on that.

37. Only then is life's purpose fulfilled. Pure Knowledge alone is capable of holding the fickle mind steady.

38. The mind should not dwell on what is above, below, midway, or within ; it should always remain unattached.

39. If the mind is asleep awaken it ; if distracted calm it ; if neither asleep nor distracted do not disturb it.

40. When the mind is thus left without anything to cling to and does not clutch at anything and is quite free from thoughts it indicates *Mukti*.

41. Rescue the mind from qualities, make it pure and fix it in the Heart. That consciousness which manifests clearly thereafter must alone be aimed at and striven for.

42. Those who meditate on the absolute Void and practise to that end become established in that ineffable state which is beyond birth and death.

43. Gods and goddesses, merits, demerits, and their fruits, knowledge of the support and of the supported are all signs of bondage in *samsara*.

44. Qualities are the pairs of opposites ; turn away from them and the highest realization results. Such a *yogi* is the *Jivanmukta* ; on discarding the body he becomes *Videhamukta*.

45. Never should the body be given up in disgust by a wise man ; it dies of itself as soon as *prarabdha karma* is exhausted.

46. There is in the Heart the infinite Consciousness 'I-I', which is at the same time pure and constant; on eradicating the ego this manifests and leads to *Moksha.*

47. Such 'I' is 'That' which is beyond qualifications and eternal as Consciousness. Contemplating without break that 'I-I' as Siva, shake off attachments.

48. Break away from all relationship of country, status, caste, and its duties and think always of your own natural state.

49. I am alone and nothing is mine, nor do I pertain to anything else; I can find none whose I am or who is mine.

50. I am the Supreme Brahman! I am the Lord of the Universe! Such is the settled conviction of the *Mukta*; all other experiences lead to bondage.

51. When the Self is clearly realized not to be the body the realizer gains peace and becomes free from all desires.

52. He who in the scriptures is described as the unborn, ever-existent Lord of all is the same as the disembodied, unqualified Self in each; I am He without a doubt.

53. I am Awareness pure and simple; I am ever free; I am indeterminable, neither grasped nor lost but indescribable. I am therefore Brahman and ever blissful.

54 & 55. I am what is covered from head to foot, within and without, as far as the enveloping skin and separate also, being immortal, the living, conscious, ever-present Self. I am the Lord of all, the motionless and the moving. I am the father, the mother, and the grandparents. It is ME that the aspirants for *Mukti* contemplate, being established in the fourth state (i.e., the *Turiya* state—the substratum beneath the waking, dream, and sleep states).

56. I alone am worthy of worship among gods and men, serpents, celestial beings, sacrifices, etc., and all worship ME alone.

57. All worship ME alone through purificatory penance, or by giving of various gifts. All creation is in ME and I am their Being.

58. I am not gross, nor subtle, nor void; I am live Consciousness and the sole Refuge of the universe. I am the eternal pure Lord of all, not bounded by the dream and other states, but transcending all creation.

59 & 60. Discern at every step that I am whatever is beginningless, conscious, unborn, primal, resident in the Heart-cavity, unsullied, and transcending the world, whatever is pure, peerless, desireless, beyond sight or other perceptions or even mental apprehension. Whatever is eternal is Brahman. He who is unshaken in such certitude is sure to change into Brahman and be immortal.

61. Fair One! Knowledge has thus been expounded here for gaining Liberation. Listen now to the conduct of the Enlightened.

62. He requires no ablutions, nor prayer, nor worship, nor *homa* (fire-worship), nor other discipline; he need not worship fire or engage in any such activity.

63. He is not bound by disciplinary codes, nor need he frequent temples for worship; he need not perform *sraddha* or go on pilgrimages or observe vows.

64. He does not reap the fruit of actions, whether religious rites or wordly activities; on the contrary he is absolved once and for all from every kind of action and code of conduct.

65. Let the aspirant give up conventional usages and traditional practices, as being chains of bondage for him.

66. Let him not accept thaumaturgic powers or amulets even when directly offered to him.

67. For all these are like ropes to tether a beast, and they will certainly drag him downward. Supreme Liberation does not lie that way; it is not found elsewhere than in Infinite Consciousness.

68. One must engage in Yoga by every means in one's power, however else one may be engaged. Festivities should be avoided even if they are in temples, mutts, or other such sacred places.

69. Spiritual advancement does not admit of even the slightest harm to a worm, reptile, insect, tree, or life in any form.

70. Therefore let no vegetable life be destroyed, nor even leaves injured. No pain should be caused to any created being or thing. Even flowers should not be plucked.

71 & 72. Even worship should be performed with flowers that have fallen from the trees of themselves. One should not interest oneself in mischievous or harmful prayers, such as *māraṇa* etc., (causing death or pain to enemies or obtaining favours from the great or love from the beloved). Worship of images should not form an end in itself.

73. Giving up all interest in the worship of sacred places and images and in the performance of religious rites pertaining thereto, engage yourself in meditating on universal *Chit* (Consciousness).

74. Dispassion is equanimity in pleasure and pain among friends and foes, with pebble or with gold.

75. A Yogi should not be swayed by desires nor yield

to gratifying the senses. He should find ecstasy in the Self alone, free from desire and fear.

76. Equanimity must always be maintained, whether praised or slandered; equal conduct must be observed towards all creatures and there should be no discrimination between the Self and non-Self.

77. Disputes, worldly associations and quarrel should be avoided. Not even spiritual disputations should be indulged in, whether good or bad.

78. Jealousy, slander, pomp, passion, envy, love, anger, fear and misery should all disappear gradually and entirely.

79. If a man is free from the pairs of opposites and lives in solitude, perfect wisdom shines in him even in the present body.

80. As Liberation results from Knowledge, thaumaturgic powers are useless; only the aspirant who still craves worldly enjoyments desires these powers.

81. If only the soul knows its true Master, Liberation is certian, whether attended by supernatural powers or not.

82. The body is composed of five elements and Siva dwells therein; from Siva down to the Earth all are manifestations of Shankara.[1]

83 & 84. Earnest seekers who worship Enlightened Ones at sight, with perfume, flowers, water, fruit, incense, clothing, and food, or by word, deed, and thought, are absolved then and there. By praising them, they share their merits, by slandering them their demerits.

85. I have expounded the whole of the Path of Knowledge and the conduct pertaining thereto, as you desired. What more do you wish to know?

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[1] A name of Siva.

11

Translations from Shankaracharya

In the eighth century A.D. pure Vedantic teaching, the doctrine of *Advaita* or Non-duality, which is the very essence of Hinduism, had shrunk to a low ebb and was restored to full vigour by the great spiritual Master Sri Shankara, known also as Shankaracharya or 'Shankara, the Teacher'. Ramana Maharshi, being a perfect *Jnani*, that is one who is Liberated from illusion and established in Absolute Knowledge, accepted Sri Shankara's teaching as his own. From time to time he translated one or another of his works, either spontaneously or on the request of some devotee who did not read Sanskrit and required a Tamil version.

Dakshinamurti Stotra

INTRODUCTION

(by Sri Bhagavan)

Brahma (the four-faced god) brought by his power of thought four sons, named Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatsujata and Sanatkumara. He asked them to attend to the work of creating the world, preserving it, etc., but they were not interested in it being completely detached. They wandered about in search of peace and tranquillity. As they were extremely dispassionate and fit (to receive spiritual instruction) Siva, the great god of compassion, manifested himself before them in human form as Dakshinamurti (god facing south) under a banian tree. He sat silently absorbed in himself, his right hand showing the gesture known as *chinmudra*.[1] The four seekers were drawn to him even as iron is drawn to a magnet. They sat before him absorbed like him in the Self. Even advanced spiritual aspirants cannot easily understand this state of silence. The world, the seer and the awareness which enables it to be cognized stand as obstacles in their way. But since it is the Single Power (*Shakti*) which manifests itself as these three and again withdraws them into itself. Everything is that power which is the Self. Shankaracharya has expounded this truth in the following hymn.

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[1] *Chinmudra* : literally, the gesture of Pure Consciousness, is indicated by making the thumb and the index finger touch each other and spreading out the remaining fingers. This gesture not only symbolises unity behind multiplicity but also the identity of the individual self and the Supreme Self.

i

Shankaracharya's Hymn to Dakshinamurti

(Translated from Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's Tamil rendering)

According to Hindu legends, Dakshinamurti (which means 'Southward-facing') is God or Siva manifested as a youth who is the Divine Guru and guides disciples older than himself through silent influence on their Heart. The name is also divided as Dakshina-amurti and taken to mean 'Formless Power'.

The Maharshi was Siva manifested, the Divine Guru who taught through Silence and was therefore identified with Dakshinamurti.

* * * *

INVOCATION

That Shankara who appeared as Dakshinamurti to grant peace to the Great Ascetics (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanat Kumara and Sanat Sujata), who revealed his real state of Silence, and who has expressed the nature of the Self in this Hymn, abides in me.

* * * *

THE HYMN

He who teaches through silence the nature of the supreme Brahman, who is a youth, who is the most eminent Guru surrounded by the most competent disciples that remain steadfast in Brahman, who has the hand-pose indicating illumination,[1] who is of the nature of bliss, who revels in himself, who has a benign countenance — that Father who has a south-facing form,[2] we adore.

To him who by Maya, as by dream, sees within himself the universe which is inside him, like a city that appears in a mirror, (but) which is manifested as if externally to him who apprehends, at the time of awakening, his own single Self, to him, the primal Guru, Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be!

To him who like a magician or even like a great *yogi* displays, by his own power, this universe which at the beginning is undifferentiated like the sprout in the seed, but which is made differentiated under the varied conditions of space, time, and *karma* and posited by Maya: to him, the Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be!

To him whose luminosity alone, which is of the nature of existence, shines forth, entering the objective world which is like the non-existent; to him who instructs those who resort to him through the text 'That thou art': to him by realizing whom there will be no more fall into the ocean of birth : to him who is the refuge of the ascetics, the Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be !

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[1] There are many traditional *mudras* or postures of the hands which are used in Indian dancing and iconography, each of which has its own meaning.

[2] The supreme Guru is the spiritual north pole and therefore traditionally faces southwards.

To him who is luminous like the light of a lamp set in a pot with many holes : to him whose knowledge moves outward through the eye and other sense organs : to him who is effulgent as 'I know', and the entire universe shines after him : to him, the unmoving Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be !

They who know the 'I' as body, breath, senses, intellect, or the Void, are deluded like women and children, and the blind and the stupid, and talk much. To him who destroys the great delusion produced by ignorance : to him who removes the obstacles to knowledge, the Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be !

To him, who sleeps when the manifested mind gets resolved, on account of the veiling by Maya, like the sun or the moon in eclipse, and on waking recognizes self-existence in the form 'I have slept till now' : to him the Guru of all that moves and moves not, Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be !

To him who, by means of the hand-pose indicating illumination, manifests to his devotees his own Self that for ever shines within as 'I', constantly, in all the inconstant states such as infancy, etc., and waking, etc. — to him whose eye is of the form of the fire of knowledge, the Guru Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be !

To the self who, deluded by Maya, sees, in dreaming and waking, the universe in its distinctions such as cause and effect, master and servant, disciple and teacher, and father and son, to him, the Guru of the world, Dakshinamurti, may this obeisance be!

To him whose eightfold form is all this moving and unmoving universe, appearing as earth, water, fire, air, ether, the sun, the moon, and soul : beyond whom, supreme and all-pervading, there exists naught else for those who enquire — to him the gracious Guru Dakshnamurti, may this obeisance be!

Since, in this Hymn, the all-self-hood has thus been explained, by listening to it, by reflecting on its meaning, by meditating on it, and by reciting it, there will come about lordship together with the supreme splendour consisting in all-self-hood; thence will be achieved, again, the unimpeded supernormal power presenting itself in eight forms.

ii

Gurustuti

INTRODUCTION

(By Sri Bhagavan)

When Sankaracharya was going about the country debating with the exponents of the various schools of thought and overcoming them he once came to the town of Mahishmati in the north where Mandana Mishra the exponent of Vedic rituals lived. He overcame him in debate but his wife refused to concede victory until she was also defeated. So, Sankaracharya argued with her and defeated in all subjects except erotics. He then asked for a respite of one month and after shedding his body in a cave under the custody of his disciples, entered into the dead body of King Amaruka and sported among the hundred queens in the guise of their husband. When the disciples found that the period specified by their Guru had already expired they grew anxious. So some of them went to him in the disguise of minstrels and sang the following hymn (to remind him).

* * * *

1. That is the Truth which the wise realize as the Self, the residuum left over on withdrawing from external objects, with or without form (ether, air, fire, water, and earth), by a careful application of the scriptural text 'Not this — Not this'. That thou art!

2. That is the Truth which, after generating the fundamentals, (ether, air, fire, water, and earth) and entering the world, lies hidden beneath the five sheaths, and which has been threshed out by the wise with the pestle of discernment, just as the grain is recovered by threshing and winnowing the chaff. That thou art!

3. Just as wild horses are broken in by whipping and stabling them, so also the unruly senses, straying among objects, are lashed by the whip of discrimination, showing that objects are unreal, and are tethered by the rope of pure intellect to the Self by the wise. Such is the Truth. That thou art!

4. The Truth has been ascertained by the wise to be the substratum which is different from the waking, dream, and deep sleep states, its own expanded modes, which indeed are held together by it like the flowers strung together on a garland. That thou art!

5. That is the Truth which the scriptures show to be the primal cause of all, elucidating the point clearly by such texts as '*Purusha* is all this', 'like gold in ornaments of gold', etc., That thou art!

6. The Truth has been forcefully proclaimed by the scriptures in such texts as 'He who is in the Sun, is in man', 'He who shines in the Sun, shines in the right eye', etc., That thou art!

7. What pure Brahmins seek so eagerly by repetition of the Vedas, by religious gifts, by earnest application of their hard-earned knowledge, and by renunciation, is the Truth. That thou art!

8. That is the Truth which the valiant have got by seeking, with controlled mind, with abstinence, penance, etc., and by diving into the Self by the self. Realizing it they are considered to be heroes with their highest purpose accomplished. That is the transcendental *Satchidananda* (Being-Consciousness-Bliss) after gaining which there is nothing more to worry about since perfect peace reigns. That thou art!

* * * *

On hearing these (verses) the Acharya bade them (his disciples) go away and promptly came out of the body of the King and re-entered his own. He then went to the lady (wife of Mandana Misra) and, after defeating her, made the two of them (her and her husband) his followers. Thereafter he went on his way enlightening the whole world.

iii

Hastamalaka Stotra

INTRODUCTION

(By Sri Bhagavan)

When Sankara, the Guru of the world, was travelling in the western parts of India and overcoming (in debate the expounders of the various schools of thought) he once came to a village known as Srivali. When a Brahmin inhabitant of the village named Prabhakara heard about his arrival he went to him with his thirteen-year-old son. He prostrated before Sankara and made his son also prostrate. He then explained that the boy had been dumb from his childhood, that he had no likes and dislikes, nor a sense of honour and dishonour, and that he was completely inactive. The Guru then raised the boy himself up and asked him as follows in a cheerful tone:

* * * *

TEXT

1. "Who are you? Whose child are you? Whither are you bound? What is your name? Whence have you come? O Child! I should like to hear your reply to these questions." Thus spoke Sri Shankaracharya to the boy, and Hastamalaka replied as follows:

2. "I am neither man, god, *yaksha*, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, Sudra, *brhamachari*, householder, forest-dweller, nor *sannyasi*; but I am pure Awareness alone.

3. "Just as the Sun causes all worldly movements, so do I — the ever-present, conscious Self — cause the mind to be active and the senses to function. Again, just as the ether is all-pervading yet devoid of any specific qualities, so am I free from all qualities.

4. "I am the conscious Self, ever-present and associated with everything in the same manner as heat is always associated with fire. I am that eternal, undifferentiated, unshaken Consciousness, on account of which the insentient mind and senses function, each in its own manner.

5. "I am that conscious Self of whom the ego is not independent as the image in a mirror is not independent of the object reflected.

6. "I am the unqualified, conscious Self, existing even after the extinction of *buddhi* just as the object remains ever the same even after the removal of the reflecting mirror.

7. "I am eternal Consciousness, dissociated from the mind and senses. I am the mind of the mind, the eye of the eye, ear of the ear and so on. I am not cognizable by the mind and senses.

8. "I am the eternal, single, conscious Self, reflected in various intellects, just as the Sun is reflected on the surface of various sheets of water.

9. "I am the single, conscious Self illumining all intellects, just as the Sun simultaneously illumines all eyes so that they perceive objects.

10. "Only those eyes that are helped by the Sun are capable of seeing objects, not others. The Source from which the Sun derives its power is myself.

11. "Just as the reflection of the Sun on agitated waters seems to be broken up, but remains perfect on a calm sur-

face, so also am I, the conscious Self, unrecognizable in agitated intellects though I clearly shine in those which are calm.

12. "Just as a fool thinks that the Sun is entirely lost when it is hidden by dense clouds, so do people think that the ever-free Self is bound.

13. "Just as the ether is all-pervading and unaffected by contact, so also does the ever-conscious Self pervade everything without being affected in any way. I am that Self.

14. "Just as a transparent crystal takes on the lines of its background, but is in no way changed thereby, and just as the unchanging moon on being reflected on undulating surfaces appears agitated, so is it with You, the all-pervading God."

* * * *

The father of the boy was speechless with wonder at those words. But the Acharya said to him: "He has become your son because of his incomplete austerities. This is your good fortune. He will not be of any use to you in this world. Let him stay with me." He bade him go back and, taking the boy with him, proceeded on his way. The disciples then asked him: "How did this boy attain the state of Brahman without hearing, etc.?" The Guru replied: "His mother left her two-year-old child in the care of a great and highly accomplished yogi who was practising austerities on the bank of the Yamuna while she went to bathe in the river with some women. The child toddled towards the water and was drowned. Out of his compassion for the disconsolate mother the Sadhu forsook his body and entered that of the child. That is why this boy has attained this high state."

iv

Atma Bodha

KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF

A Muslim devotee once sent a Tamil translation of this Sanskrit poem of Sankaracharya to Bhagavan. Bhagavan prepared the following new translation in Tamil. He completed the whole work in one night!

* * * *

"Can Shankara, the Enlightener of the Self, be different from one's own Self? Who but he, does this day, abiding as the inmost Self in me, speak this in the Tamil language?"

— Sri Ramana

1. This — Atma Bodha — is meant to fulfil the want of the seekers of Liberation who, by their prolonged *tapas*, have already cleansed themselves of impurities and become mentally peaceful and free from desires.

2. Of all the means to Liberation knowledge is the only direct one—as essential as fire to cooking; without it, Liberation cannot be gained.

3. Not being opposed to ignorance, *karma* does not destroy it. On the other hand, knowledge destroys ignorance as surely as light does darkness.

4. Owing to ignorance, the Self now appears to be covered up ; on the removal of ignorance, the pure Self will shine forth of Itself, like the sun after the dispersal of clouds.

5. The *jiva* is mixed up with ignorance. By constant practice of knowledge the *jiva* becomes pure, because knowledge disappears (along with ignorance), as the cleansing nut with the impurities in the water.

Doubt : But here is the world ; how can the Self alone be real and non-dual ?

6. *Answer* : *Samsara* is full of likes and dislikes and other opposites. Like a dream, it seems real for the time being ; but, on waking, it vanishes because it is unreal.

Doubt : Because the dream is negated on waking, I know it to be unreal ; but the world persists and I find it only real.

7. *Answer* : So long as the substratum of all, the non-dual Brahman is not seen, the world seems real—like illusory silver in a piece of mother-of-pearl.

Doubt : But the world is so diverse ; yet, you say there is one only.

8. *Answer* : Like bubbles rising on the surface of the waters of the ocean, all the worlds arise from, stay in and resolve into the Supreme Being (*Paramesa*) who is the root cause and prop of all.

9. In the Being-Consciousness-Bliss, which is all permeating, eternal Vishnu, all these diverse objects and individuals appear (as phenomena) like various ornaments made of gold.

Doubt : Yes ; but what about the numberless individual souls ?

10. *Answer* : Just as the all-pervading *akasa* (ether) appears fragmented in different objects (as in a pit, a jar, a house, a theatre hall, etc.) but remains undifferentiated on

the limitations falling away, similarly with the single, non-dual Ruler of the senses (seeming to function as gods, men, cattle, etc.).

> *Doubt* : But the individuals have different traits and function according to different conditions.

11. *Answer* : The traits etc. are also superimposed. Pure water (tasteless by itself) tastes sweet, bitter, saltish, etc., according to the admixture in it (*upadhis*). Similarly, race, name, status, etc., are all superimposed on the non-dual Self of all. What are these *upadhis* which play such tricks on the Self? They are gross, subtle and very subtle, as described here.

12. The gross body made up of the five gross elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether) is meant to reap the fruits of past actions in the shape of pleasure and pain.

13. The subtle body consisting of the five airs, the mind, intellect, the ten senses and made up of subtle elements is also meant for enjoyment (as in dreams).

14. Inexpressible and beginningless ignorance is said to be the causal body (as in deep sleep). Know the Self to be other than these three *upadhis*.

> *Doubt* : If so, why is the Self not evident to me? On the other hand, *Sruti* says, "This Purusha is made up of *annarasa* (essence of food)."

15. *Answer* : Just as a clear crystal (itself colourless) appears red, blue, yellow, etc., according to the background, so also the Self, pure and untainted, seems to be identical with the body, the senses, the mind, intellect or blissful ignorance (*pancha kosa*) when in contact with them.

16. Just as husking the paddy exposes the grain within (the rice), so also should one judiciously separate the pure Atman from the sheaths covering it.

Doubt: Atma is said to be everywhere. Why should it then be judiciously looked for within the five sheaths?

17. *Answer*: Though always and everywhere present, Self does not shine forth in all places. Just as light is reflected only in a transparent medium, so also the Self is clearly seen in the intellect only.

18. The Self is realised in the intellect as the witness of the activities of, and yet separate from the body, the senses, the mind, intellect and gross nature (*prakriti*) as is a king in relation to his subjects.

Doubt: The Self seems to participate in their activities: so he cannot be different from them, nor be their witness.

19. *Answer*: Just as the moon seems to move when the clouds around her move, so also the Self seems to the undiscriminating to be active, when, actually, the senses are active.

Doubt: To be active, the body etc. must also be intelligent; they are said to be inert. How can they act without the intelligent Self participating in their actions?

20. *Answer*: Just as men do their duties in the light of the sun (but the sun does not participate in them), so also the body, senses, etc., function in the light of the Self without its participating in them.

Doubt: True, the Self alone is intelligence. I know myself to be born, growing, decaying, happy, or unhappy and so on. Am I right?

21. *Answer*: No. The characteristics (birth, death, etc.) of the body and the senses are superimposed on the Being-Consciousness-Bliss as is the blue in the sky by those who do not discriminate.

22. So also the characteristics of the mind, such as agency, etc., are by ignorance superimposed on the Atma, as are the movements of water on the moon reflected in it.

23. Only when the intellect is manifested, likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain are felt. In deep sleep, the intellect remaining latent, they are not felt. Therefore, they are of the intellect and not of the Atman (the Self). Here is the real nature of the Atman :

24. As light is the very sun, coldness the water, heat the fire, so also the eternal, pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss is the very Self.

> *Doubt* : Sometimes or other every individual experiences, "I am happy," and thus Being-Consciousness-Bliss experience is plain. How can one make the experience permanent and unchanging ?

25. *Answer* : Being-Consciousness is of the Self ; the 'I' mode or modification is of the intellect ; these are distinctly two. However, owing to ignorance, the individual mixes them together and thinks 'I know' and acts accordingly.

26. Never is there any change (or action) in Atma nor knowledge in the intellect. Only the *jiva* is deluded into thinking itself to be the knower, doer and seer.

27. Like the snake in the rope, mistaking the *jiva* for the Self, one is subject to fear. If, on the other hand, one knows oneself not as a *jiva* but as the supreme Self, one is altogether free from fear.

28. Only the Self illumines the senses, intellect, etc., as a lamp does objects such as pots. The Self is not illumined by them as they are inert.

> *Doubt* : If the Self cannot be made known by the intellect, there will be no knower to know the Self and the Self cannot be known.

29. *Answer* : To see a light, no other light is needed. So also, the Self being self-effulgent, needs no other means of knowledge. It shines of itself.

Doubt : If so, every one must be self-realised, effortlessly, but it is not so.

30. *Answer* : On the strength of the Vedic teaching, 'Not this—not this', eliminate all the adjuncts (*upadhis*) and with the help of the *Mahavakyas*, realise the identity of the *jivatma* (individual self) with the *Paramatma* (the Supreme Self).

31. The whole objective world such as the body is born of ignorance and transient like a bubble on water. Know the Self to be distinct from it and identical with Brahman (the Supreme).

32. Being distinct from the gross body, birth, death, old age, debility, etc., do not pertain to me. Not being the senses, I have no connection with the objects of the senses such as sound etc.

33. The Srutis declare : "I am not the vital air — not the mind, (but) pure (Being)." Not being the mind I am free from likes and dislikes, fear etc.

34. "I am free from qualities and actionless, eternal, undifferentiated, untainted, unchanging, formless, ever free and pure.

35. "Like ether, I am always pervading all, in and out, unswerving, ever equal in all, pure, untainted, clear and unshaken.

36. That which remains eternal, pure, ever-free, all alone, unbroken bliss, non-dual, Being-Consciousness- Bliss, transcendent Brahman (the same) am I.

37. Long, constant practice of '*I am Brahman only*' destroys all *vasanas* (latent tendencies), born of ignorance as an efficacious remedy (*rasayana*) eradicates a disease.

38. Be dispassionate, keep the senses under control ; and let the mind not wander ; sit in a solitary place and meditate on the Self as Infinite and One alone.

39. Keep the mind pure ; with keen intellect, resolve all that is objective into the Self and always meditate on the Self as clear and single like ether.

40. Having discarded all names, forms, etc., you are now the knower of the Supreme Being and will remain as perfect Consciousness-Bliss.

41. Being the same as Consciousness-Bliss, there is no longer any differentiation such as the knower and the known ; and the Self shines forth as Itself.

42. If in this manner by process of constant meditatation, the two pieces of wood, namely the Self and the ego are rubbed together, the flames from the fire of knowledge burn away the whole range of ignorance.

43. On knowledge destroying ignorance in this way, like the light of dawn scattering the darkness of night, the Self will rise like the sun in all its glory.

44. True—the Self is always here and now ; yet it is not apparent, owing to ignorance. On ignorance being destroyed the Self seems as if it were gained, like the necklace on one's own neck.[1]

45. Just as in darkness a post is mistaken for a thief, so is Brahman in ignorance mistaken for a *jiva*. If, however, the true nature of a *jiva* is seen, delūsion vanishes.

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[1] The allusion is to the story of a lady wearing a precious necklace, who suddenly forgot where it was, grew anxious, looked for it everywhere and even asked others to help, until a kind friend pointed out that it was round the seeker's own neck.

46. Knowledge arising on the experience of reality immediately destroys the ignorant perception of 'I' and 'mine', which resemble the delusion of direction in darkness.

47. A *jnani* who is a perfectly self-realized *yogi*, sees by the eye of wisdom all objective phenomena to be in and of the Self and thus the Self to be the Sole Being.

Doubt: How does he then act in the world?

48. *Answer*: Just as clay is the only material from which different utensils are formed (such as pots, jars, etc.), so he sees that the Self, too, is the whole universe and there is nothing but the Self.

49. In order to be liberated while yet alive, the Sage should completely eschew the adjuncts (*upadhis*), and thus gain the real nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, like the maggot that turns into a wasp.

50. Having crossed the ocean of illusion and having killed the demons of likes and dislikes, the *yogi*, now united to *santhi* (peace), finds delight in the Self and so remains in his own glory.

51. The *jivanmukta* (from V. 49), freed from all desire for transient, external pleasures, delights in his own Self and remains clear and steady like a lamp in a pot.

52. Like the *akasa* (ether) which remains untainted by the objects contained therein, the *Muni* (Sage) remains untainted by the adjuncts (*upadhis*) covering him. Being the all-knower he remains like one that knows not and moves about like the air uncontaminated by the objects it touches.

53. On the dissolution of the adjuncts (the body, senses, etc.) the Sage now freed from particularities merges in the

all permeating Being (Vishnu), like water in water, ether in ether or fire in fire.

54. There is no gain over and above this gain, no pleasure over and above this bliss, no knowledge over and above this knowledge, know this to be Brahman.

55. That on seeing which nothing remains to see, on becoming which there is no more return to *samsara*, on knowing which nothing remains to know, know that to be Brahman.

56. What fills everything, above, below and all round, itself Being-Consciousness-Bliss, non-dual, infinite, eternal, one only, know that to be Brahman.

57. What remains as immutable, unbroken Bliss, and as one only what even the scriptures indirectly denote by the process of elimination as 'not this — not this', know the same to be Brahman.

58. Dependent on a fraction of the inexhaustible Bliss of the Atman, all the gods such as Brahma enjoy bliss according to their grades.

59. Like butter in milk, the objective universe is contained in it; all the activities are based on it alone. Therefore Brahman is all-pervading.

60. What is neither subtle nor gross, short nor long, produced nor spent, what is devoid of form, attribute, caste, and name, know it to be Brahman.

61. By whose light the sun and other luminaries shine forth, but which is not itself illumined by them and in whose light all this is seen, know it to be Brahman.

62. Like fire in a piece of red-hot iron, Brahman permeates the whole world in and out and all through, makes it shine and Itself also shines by Itself.

63. Brahman is distinct from the universe, yet there remains nothing apart from Brahman. Should any other than Brahman appear, it is only an illusion like water in a mirage.

64. Whatever is seen or heard, it cannot be different from Brahman. True knowledge finds Brahman to be Being-Consciousness-Bliss and One without a second.

65. Only the eye of Wisdom can see the Omnipresent Being-Consciousness-Bliss, but not the eye of ignorance for a blind eye cannot see the sun.

66. Like gold freed from dross, the *jiva* (*sadhaka*) has all his impurities burnt away by the fire of knowledge bursting into flames fanned by *sravana, manana* and *nidhidhyasana* (hearing, reflection and contemplation) and now he shines forth by himself.

67. Because the Sun of Knowledge, the chaser of darkness has risen, the Atman shines in the expanse of the Heart as the Omnipresent sustainer of all and illumines all.

68. He who bathes in the clear, warm, ever-refreshing waters of the Atman which, being available everywhere, here and now, need not be sought for in special centres and seasons, such a one remains actionless. He is the Knower of all; he pervades all and is ever immortal.

V

Vivekachudamani

This work by Shankaracharya, together with the Drik Drishya Viveka, was translated into Tamil prose by Bhagavan while he was still living in Virupaksha Cave. It is a very free translation, even the order of the paragraphs being changed to some extent.

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INTRODUCTION

By Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Every being in the world yearns to be always happy and free from the taint of sorrow, and desires to get rid of bodily ailments, etc. which are not of its true nature. Further, everyone cherishes the greatest love for himself, and this love is not possible in the absence of happiness. In deep sleep, though devoid of everything, one has the experience of being happy. Yet, due to the ignorance of the real nature of one's own being, which is happiness itself, people flounder in the vast ocean of material existence, forsaking the right path that leads to happiness, and act under the mistaken belief that the way to be happy consists in obtaining the pleasures of this and the other world.

Unfortunately, however, there is no such happiness, which has not the taint of sorrow. It is precisely for the purpose of pointing out the straight path to true happiness that Lord Siva, taking on the guise of Sri Shankaracharya, wrote the commentaries on the Triple Canon (*Prasthana Traya*) of the Vedanta, which extol the excellence of this bliss; and that he demonstrated it by his own example in life. These commentaries, however, are of little use to those ardent seekers who are intent upon realizing the bliss of Liberation but have not the scholarship necessary for studying them.

It is for such as these that Sri Shankara revealed the essence of the commentaries in this short treatise, 'The Crown-gem of Discrimination', explaining in detail the points that have to be grasped by those who seek Liberation, and thereby directing them to the true and direct path.

Sri Shankara begins by observing that it is hard indeed to attain human birth, and that, having attained it, one should strive to achieve the bliss of Liberation, which is really only the nature of one's being. By *Jnana* or Spiritual knowledge alone is this Bliss to be realized, and *Jnana* is achieved only through *vichara* or steady enquiry. In order to learn this method of enquiry, says Sri Shankara, one should seek the grace of a Guru; and he then proceeds to describe the qualities of the Guru and his disciple and how the latter should approach and serve his master. He further emphasizes that in order to realize the bliss of Liberation one's own individual effort is an essential factor. Mere book-learning never yields this bliss; it can be realized only through Self-enquiry or *vichara,* which consists of *sravana* or devoted attention to the precepts of the Guru, *manana* or deep contemplation and *nididhyasana* or cultivation of equanimity in the Self.

The three bodies, are non-self and are unreal. The Self, that is the *Aham* or 'I' is quite different from them. It is due to ignorance that the sense of Self or the 'I' notion is foisted on that which is not Self, and this indeed is bondage. Since from ignorance arises bondage, from Knowledge ensues Liberation. To know this from the Guru is *sravana.*

The process of *manana*, which is subtle enquiry or deep contemplation, consists in rejecting the three bodies consisting of the five sheaths (physical, vital, mental, intellectual, and blissful), as not 'I' and discovering through subtle enquiry of 'Who am I?' that which is different from all three and exists single and universal in the heart as *Aham* or 'I', just as a stalk of grass is delicately drawn out from its sheath. This 'I' is denoted by the word *tvam* (in the Scriptural dictum, '*Tat-tvam-asi*' That thou art)'

The world of name and form is but an adjunct of *Tat* or Brahman and, having no separate reality, is rejected as reality and affirmed as nothing else but Brahman. The instruction of the disciple by the Guru in the *Mahavakya Tat-tvam-asi,* which declares the identity of the Self and the Supreme, is this *upadesa* (spiritual guidance). The disciple is then enjoined to remain in the beatific state of *Aham-Brahman*, (I—the Absolute). Nevertheless, the old tendencies of the mind sprout up thick and strong and constitute an obstruction. These tendencies are threefold and ego is their root. The ego flourishes in the externalized and differentiating consciousness caused by the forces of projection due to *rajas* and veiling due to *tamas.*

To fix the mind firmly in the heart until these forces are destroyed and to awaken with unswerving, ceaseless vigilance the true and cognate tendency which is characteristic of the Atman and is expressed by saying: *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman), and *Brahmaivaham* (Brahman alone am I) is termed *nididhyasana* or *Atmanusandhana,* that is constancy in the Self. This is otherwise called *bhakti, yoga* and *dhyana*.

Atmanusandhana has been compared to churning curds in order to make butter, the mind being compared to the churn, the heart to the curds, and the practice of concentration on the Self to the process of churning. Just as butter is made by churning the curds and fire by friction, so the natural and changeless state of *nirvikalpa samadhi* is produced by unswerving vigilant concentration on the Self, ceaseless like the unbroken flow of oil. This readily and spontaneously yields that direct, immediate, unobstructed, and universal perception of Brahman, which is at once knowledge and experience and which transcends time and space.

This perception is Self-realization. Achieving it cuts the knot of the heart. The false delusions of ignorance, the vicious and age-long tendencies of the mind which constitute this knot are destroyed. All doubts are dispelled and the bondage of *karma* is severed.

Thus in this crown-gem of Discrimination has Sri Shankara described *samadhi* or spiritual trance which is the limitless Bliss of Liberation, beyond doubt and duality, and at the same time has indicated the means for its attainment. To attain this state of freedom from duality is the real purpose of life, and only he who has done so is a *Jivanmukta*, liberated while yet alive, not one who has a mere theoretical understanding of what constitutes *purushartha* or the desired end and aim of human endeavour.

Thus defining a *Jivanmukta*, Sri Shankara declares him to be free from the bonds of threefold karma (*sanchita, agami* and *prarabdha*). The disciple attains this state and then relates his personal experience. He who is liberated is indeed free to act as he pleases, and when he leaves the body, he abides in Liberation and never returns to this birth, which is death.

Sri Shankara thus describes Realization, that is Liberation, as twofold, *Jivanmukti* and *Videhamukti*, as explained above. Moreover, in this short treatise, written in the form of a dialogue between a Guru and his disciple, he has considered many other relevant topics.

(By courtesy of the *Sunday Times*, Madras.)

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INVOCATION

Rejoice eternally ! ! The heart rejoices at the feet of the Lord, who is the Self, shining within as 'I-I' eternally, so that there is no (alternation of) night and day. This will result in removal of ignorance of the Self.

* * * *

PRAISE TO THE GURU

Sri Shankara Jagathguru shines as the form of Lord Siva. In this work, *Vivekachudamani*, he has expounded in detail the heart of Vedanta and its meaning in order that the most ardent of those qualified for Liberation may acquaint themselves with it and attain immortality.

Homage to the ever blissful Sri Govinda Sadguru who is to be known only by the ultimate truth of Vedanta and not by any other standard.

* * * *

THE TEXT

It is indeed very difficult to obtain a human body. Even though one does, it is very difficult to become a Brahmin. Even if one becomes one, it is still more difficult to walk in the path of *Vaidik Dharma* in which the Vedas are chanted. Still more difficult is it to become a perfect scholar, and more difficult again to undertake enquiry into the Self and the non-Self. Yet more difficult than all this is to obtain wisdom born of experience of the Self. Liberation in the form of abidance as the Self, born of that wisdom, is not to be attained except as a result of righteous actions performed throughout countless crores of births. However, even though all the above qualifications may not be obtained, Liberation is assured through the Grace of the Lord if only three conditions are obtained : that is a human birth, intense desire for Liberation, and association with Sages.

If, by some great penance, that rarity a human body is obtained, with its ability to understand the meaning of the scriptures, and yet, owing to attachment to insentient things, effort is not made to attain the immutable state of Liberation, which is one's own true state, then indeed one is a fool committing suicide. What greater fool is there than one who does not seek his own good ?

Liberation is not to be achieved through endless cycles of time by reading the scriptures or worshipping the gods or by anything else than knowledge of the unity of Brahman and Atman. Wealth or actions made possible by wealth cannot produce the yearning for Liberation. Therefore the scriptures have rightly declared that action can never produce Liberation. In order to obtain Liberation one must heroically renounce even the very desire for the pleasures of this world. Then one must seek the Perfect Guru who is the embodiment of Peace and must concentrate one's mind and meditate ceaselessly on that into which one is initiated. Such meditation leads to abidance in the wisdom of the experience obtained. Embarking in that ship of wisdom, one must ferry over to the shore of Liberation that Self which is immersed in the ocean of *samsara*. Therefore the courageous aspirant should give up attachment to wife, sons and property and give up all activity. By so doing he should free himself from bondage to the cycle of birth and death and seek Liberation. Actions are prescribed only for purification of the mind, not for realization of the Self. Knowledge of the truth of the Self is obtained only by Self-enquiry and not by any number of actions. One who mistakes a rope for a serpent is cast into fear thereby and his fear and distress can be removed only by the knowledge that it is a rope. A friend who knows this tells him so and he investigates and finds that it is so. There is no other way. Similarly, knowledge of Brahman is obtained through initiation by the Guru and enquiry into Truth. That Truth cannot be realized through purificatory baths, offerings, breath-control, or any other practice. He who seeks Liberation through knowledge of the Self must enquire into the Self with the help of the perfect Guru who, being free from desires, is a knower of Brahman and an Ocean of Grace. It is mainly through enquiry that he who is competent achieves knowledge of the Self ; circumstance, time, and the Grace of the Lord are but aids to the quest.

In order to be qualified for enquiry into the Self, a man must have a powerful intellect and ability to seize the essential and reject the inessential besides the various qualities enumerated in the scriptures. What are these ? He must be able to discriminate between the Real and the unreal. He must have an unattached mind. He must possess control over the outer and inner sense organs. He must ardently desire Liberation. And he must be tireless in practice. Only such a one is qualified to enquire into the Brahman. The qualifications are enumerated as follows :

1. Discrimination between the Real and the unreal.

2. Disinclination to enjoy the fruits of one's actions either in this or in any further life.

3. The six virtues of tranquillity, self-control, withdrawal, forbearance, faith, and concentration of the Self.

4. Intense yearning for Liberation.

The aspirant must indeed have these qualities in order to attain abidance in the Self ; without them there can be no realization of the Truth. Let us see what these are :

1. Discrimination between the Real and the unreal is the firm conviction that Brahman alone is the Truth and that the world is unreal.

2. We both observe and learn from the scriptures that all pleasures experienced by animate beings, from Brahman downwards, are transient and impermanent and involve sorrows and imperfections ; giving up the desire for them is *vairagya* or non-attachment.

3. (*a*) Tranquillity implies fixing the mind upon its target by meditating frequently on the imperfections of things and becoming dissatisfied with them.

(*b*) Self-control means controlling the outer and inner sense organs and fixing them in their respective centres.

(*c*) Withdrawal means giving up all outer activity by fixing the mind on its target so firmly that it is not led by its previous tendencies to dwell on objects.

(*d*) Forbearance means the endurance of any sorrows that may befall without trying to avoid them.

(*e*) Faith, which is the cause of Self-realization, is the outcome of firm conviction of the truth of Vedantic scriptures and of the words of the Guru.

(*f*) Concentration is making every effort to fix the mind on the pure Brahman despite its wandering nature.

These are said to be the six qualifications needed for the practice of *samadhi*.

4. Intense yearning for Liberation arises from the desire to free oneself by realizing one's true nature, attaining freedom from the bondage of the body and ego which is caused by ignorance. This yearning may be of different grades. It may be only dull or medium, but it may be highly developed by means of the six qualifications mentioned above, and in this case it can bear fruit. If the yearning is intense these qualifications speedily bear fruit. But if renunciation and yearning are weak the result may be mere appearance like a mirage in the desert.

Of all the means leading to Liberation, *bhakti* or devotion is the best; and this *bhakti* means seeking the truth of one's own Self, so say the Sages.

The aspirant who possesses the necessary qualifications and wishes to undertake Self-enquiry must seek a Sad-Guru and bow down to him with humility, awe, and reverence and serve him in various ways. The Sad-Guru is one capable of destroying the bondage of those who adhere to him. He is an ocean of immutable wisdom. His knowledge is all-comprehensive. He is pure as crystal. He has attained victory over desires. He is supreme among the knowers of Brahman. He rests calmly in Brahman like a fire that has consumed its fuel. He is an endless reservoir of mercy. There is no explanation why he is merciful; it is his very nature. He befriends all sadhus who adhere to him. To such a Guru the disciple appeals: 'I bow down to you, my Master, true friend of the helpless! I pray you to help me across the terrible ocean of bondage into which I have fallen and by which I am overwhelmed. A mere gracious look from you is a raft that will save me. Oh flowing stream of Grace! I am shaken violently by the winds of a froward fate. I do not know which way to turn. I am tormented by the unquenchable fire of *samsara* that burns around me. I continually pray to you to calm me by the nectar of your Grace. *Sadhus* such as you abide ever in peace, are great and magnanimous and constantly benefit the world, like the season of spring. Not only have they themselves crossed the ocean of *samsara* but they can calm the fears of others. Just as the world after being heated by the burning rays of the sun is calmed by the cool and gracious rays of the moon, so also it is in your nature to give protection for no reason whatever to people like me who have taken refuge with you from the ocean of *samsara*. Indeed, being helpless and having no other refuge, I have cast on you the burden of protecting me from this *samsara* of birth and death. Oh Lord! the flames of the conflagration of individual being have scorched me; cool me through the outpouring of your gracious words. Your words bring peace, being born of your experience of Divine Bliss. Blessed are they that have even received your gracious glance. Blessed are they that have become acceptable to you. How shall I cross the ocean and what means is there? I do not indeed know what is my fate. You alone must protect me, setting me free from this sorrow of *samsara*.'

The disciple thus takes refuge with the Guru, as enjoined by the scriptures. He waits upon the Guru, unable to bear the burning winds of *samsara*. His mind grows calm through following the Guru's bidding. The Teacher, that is the knower of Brahman, casts upon him his gracious glance and touches his soul inwardly, giving him assurance of protection. 'My learned disciple, have no fear. No harm shall come to you hereafter. I will give you a single mighty means by which you can cross this terrible, fathomless ocean of *samsara* and thus obtain supreme Bliss. By this means world-renouncing sadhus have crossed it and your bondage also shall be destroyed here and now. The scriptures declare : "The means of Liberation for seekers are faith, devotion, meditation, and yoga." You, too, shall obtain these means and if you practise them constantly shall be set free from the bondage to the body caused by ignorance. You are eternally of the nature of *Paramatma* and this bondage of *samsara,* of non-Self, has come upon you only through igonrance. It will be utterly destroyed by knowledge born of enquiry into the Self.'

Gazing on the Guru who says this, the disciple asks : 'Oh, Master, what is bondage ? How did it come, how does it survive, and how is it to be destroyed ? What is the non-Self ? And what, indeed, is the Self ? And what is discrimination between Self and non-Self ? Graciously bless me with answers to these questions so that, by hearing your replies I may be blessed.'

To this request of the disciple the Master answers : 'Dear soul ! if you have felt the desire to be the Self, free from the bondage caused by ignorance, you are indeed blessed. You have achieved life's purpose. You have sanctified thereby your whole line. Just as sons and other relations pay off the debts of a father, so there are others who will free one from bearing a burden on one's head. But the distress caused by hunger can be cured only by eating for oneself, not by others eating for one. And if you are sick you must take medicine and keep a proper diet yourself ; no one else can do it for you. Similarly, bondage comes to you through your own ignorance and can only be removed by yourself. However learned a man may be, he cannot rid himself of the ignorance born of desire and fate, except by realizing Brahman with his own infinite knowledge. How does it help you if others see the moon? You must open your eyes and see it for yourself. Liberation cannot be obtained through *Sankhya*, Yoga, ritual, or learning but only through knowledge of the oneness of Brahman and Atma. Just as the beautiful form of the *veena* and the music of its strings only give pleasure to people, but confer no kingdom on them, so also plausible words, clever arguments, ability to expound the scriptures, and the erudition of the learned only give pleasure for the moment. Even study of the scriptures is useless since it does not give the desired result. Once one knows the truth of the Supreme, study of the scriptures becomes unnecessary because there is nothing more to be gained. Therefore one must pass over the great forest of the *sastras*, which only yields confusion of mind, and must instead actually experience the Self through the Guru, who is a knower of Reality. To one who is bitten by the serpent of ignorance, salvation can come only from the elixir of Self-knowledge and not from the Vedas, scriptures, incantations, or any other remedies. Just as a person's sickness is not removed without taking medicine, so too his state of bondage is not removed by scriptural texts such as "I am Brahman" without his own direct experience of the Self. One does not become a king by merely saying: "I am a king" without destroying one's enemies and obtaining the reality of power. Similarly one does not obtain Liberation as Brahman Itself by merely repeating the scriptural text "I am Brahman" without destroying the duality caused by ignorance and directly experiencing the Self. A treasure trove hidden under the ground is not obtained by merely hearing about it but only by being told by a friend who knows it and then digging and removing the slab that hides it and taking it out from below the ground. Similarly one must hear about one's true state from a Guru who knows Brahman and then meditate upon it and experience it directly through constant meditation. Without this, the true form of one's own Self, that is hidden by Maya, cannot be realized through mere argumentation. Therefore those who are wise themselves make every effort to remove the bondage of individual existence and obtain Liberation, just as they would to get rid of some disease.

'Beloved disciple, the question that you have put is of the utmost importance and acceptable to realized souls well versed in the scriptures. It is like an aphorism bearing a subtle meaning and understandable to him who craves Liberation. Listen to this reply with a calm and undisturbed mind and your bonds will be cut asunder at once. The primary means of obtaining Liberation is *vairagya* (dispassion). Other qualities such as tranquillity, self-control, forbearance, and renunciation of activity can come later, later again the hearing of Vedantic truth, and still later meditation on that truth. Finally comes perpetual and prolonged meditation on Brahman. This gives rise to *nirvikalpa samadhi*, through which is attained the strength for direct realization of the supreme Self. This power of direct Realization enables the discriminating soul to experience the Bliss of Liberation here and now. Such is the *sadhana* leading to Liberation.

'Now I shall tell you about discrimination between Self and non-Self. Listen and keep it firmly in mind. Of these two I shall speak first about the non-Self.

'The brain, bones, fat, flesh, blood, skin, and semen are the seven factors that constitute the gross body. So say those who know. The feet, thighs, chest, shoulders, back, head, etc., are its members. People regard it as "I" owing to the mind's attachment to it. It is the primary attraction to all, and the most obvious. It is made up of ether, air, fire, water, and earth which, as the subtle essences, form sense objects, and the groups of five such as sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell. The ego (*jiva*) being intent on pleasure, regards these as means of enjoyment. Foolish and ignorant persons are bound to sense objects by the rope of desire, attracted according to the power of their *karma* which leads them up and down and causes them to wander in distress. The serpent and deer die through attachment to sound, the elephant through attachment to touch, the moth through attachment to taste, and the bee through attachment to smell. If these die through attachment to a single sense, what must be the fate of man who is attached to all five? The evil effects of sense objects are more harmful than the poison of the cobra,[1] because poison only kills him who takes it, whereas sense objects bring destruction to him who only sees them or even thinks of them. He alone obtains Liberation who, with the sharp sword of detachment, cuts the strong rope of love for sense objects and so frees himself from them. Otherwise, even though a man be well versed in all the six *sastras*, he will not obtain Liberation. Desire, like a crocodile, instantly seizes the aspirant after Liberation who tries to cross the ocean of *samsara* and reach the shore of Liberation without firm detachment and straight away drags him down into the ocean. Only that aspirant who kills the crocodile with the keen sword of detachment can cross the ocean and safely reach the shore of Liberation. He who, lacking good sense, enters upon one path after another of attachment to sense objects experiences ever greater distress until he is finally destroyed. But he who exerts control over himself walks on the path of discrimination laid down by the Guru and attains his goal. This indeed is the truth. Therefore if you really want Liberation cast away the pleasure of sense objects as though they were poison. Hold firmly to the virtues of contentment, compassion, forgiveness, sincerity, tranquillity, and self-control. Give up all actions performed out of attachment to the body and strive ceaselessly for Liberation from the bondage caused by ignorance. This body is finally consumed, whether by earth, fire, beasts, or birds. He who, forgetting his real nature, mistakes this body for the Self, gets attached to it and cherishes it and by so doing becomes the murderer of the Self. He who still cares for the body while seeking the Self is like one who catches hold of a crocodile to cross a river. Infatuation with the body is indeed fatal to the aspirant after Liberation. Only he who overcomes this infatuation obtains Liberation. Therefore you too must overcome infatuation for the body and for wife and children and then you will attain Liberation, i.e., the supreme state of Vishnu which the great Sages have attained. This gross body is very much to be deprecated, consisting as it does of skin, flesh, blood, arteries and veins, fat, marrow and bones, and is full of urine and excreta. It is produced by one's own past actions out of the gross elements. The subtle elements unite together to produce these gross elements. Thus it becomes a habitation for the enjoyment of pleasures by the ego, like his home for a householder.

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[1] In Sanskrit this is a play of words, as *vishaya* means sense object and *visha* poison.

It is in the waking state that the ego experiences the gross body. It is in this state alone that it can be experienced, when the Self, though really separate from it, is deluded into identifying itself with it and, through the external organs, enjoys the various wonderful gross objects of pleasure such as garlands, sandal paste, woman, etc. Know that the whole of outward *samsara* comes upon the Spirit (*Purusha*) through the medium of the gross body. Birth, growth, old age, decay, and death are its characteristics. Childhood, boyhood, youth, and old age are its stages. Castes and orders of life are ordained for it. It is also subject to different modes of treatment, to honour and dishonour, and is the abode of various diseases.

'The ears, skin, eyes, nose, and tongue are organs of knowledge because they enable us to cognize objects. The vocal organs, hands, feet, etc., are organs of action because they perform their respective modes of action. The internal organ (mind) is single in itself but is variously named, mind, intellect, ego, or desire (*chitta*). Mind is the faculty of desire or repulsion. Intellect is the faculty of determining the truth of things. The ego is the faculty which identifies itself with the body as self. Desire (*chitta*) is the faculty that seeks for pleasure. Just as gold and silver are shaped into various forms, so the single life-breath becomes *prana, apana, vyana, udana, samana.* The group of five elements (ether, fire, water, air, earth), the group of five organs of knowledge (ears, eyes, skin, nose, tongue), the group of five organs of action (vocal organs, hands, feet, anus, genitals), the group of five vital airs (*prana, apana, vyana, udana, samana*), the group of the four internal organs (*chitta, manas, buddhi, ahankara*), all these together compose the subtle body called the city of eight constituents. Being possessed of desires, it is produced out of the elements prior to their sub-division and mutual combination. The soul has brought this beginningless superimposition upon itself by its actions. This state of experience is the dream state. In this state the mind functions of its own accord, experiencing itself as the actor, due to its various tendencies and to the effect of experiences of the waking state. In this state the Self, shining with its own light, is superimposed upon the mind without being attached to its actions and remains a mere witness. Just as the axe and other tools of the carpenter are only the means for his activities, so this subtle body is only the means for the activities of the Self which is ever aware. The internal organs perform all their actions owing to the mere proximity of the Self, whereas the Self remains unaffected and untouched by these actions. Good or bad eyesight is due to the state of the eyes, deafness to the ears, and so on; they do not affect the Self, the Knower. Those who know say that inhalation, exhalation, yawning, sneezing, etc., are functions of the life-breath, as also are hunger and thirst. The inner organ (mind), with the light of reflected consciousness, has its seat in the outer organs, such as the eye, and identifies itself with them. This inner organ is the ego. The ego is the actor and enjoyer, identifying itself with the body as "I". Under the influence of the three *gunas* it assumes the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. When sense objects are to its liking it becomes happy, when not, unhappy. Thus, pleasure and pain pertain to the ego and are not charateristics of the ever-blissful Self. Objects appear to be pleasant because of the Self and not because of any inherent bliss that is in them. The Self has no grief in it. Its bliss, which is independent of objects, is experienced by everyone in the state of deep sleep and therefore it is dear to everyone. This is borne out by the authority of the Upanishads and by direct perception, tradition, and inference.

'The Supreme (Brahman) has a wonderful *Shakti* (Power or Energy) known as "the Undifferentiated", "Ignorance", "Maya", etc. She is of the form of the three *gunas*. Her existence is inferred by those of understanding from the effects produced by her. She is far superior to all objectivity and creates the entire universe. She is neither being nor non-being, neither does she partake of the nature of both. She is neither composed of parts nor indivisible nor both. She is neither formal nor formless nor both. She is none of these. Such as she is, she is indescribable. She is also beginningless. Yet just as the deluded fear of a snake in a piece of rope is removed by recognizing the rope as such, so too Maya may be destroyed by integral knowledge of Brahman. She has her three *gunas* which are to be known from their effects. *Rajas*, whose colour is red, is of the nature of activity and is the power of projection. It is the original cause of all activity. From it arise the mental modifications that lead to desires and sorrows. Lust, anger, grasping, pride, hatred, egotism are all tendencies characteristic of *rajas*. This projecting power is the cause of bondage because it creates outward or worldly tendencies. *Tamas*, whose colour is black, is the veiling power. It makes things appear other than what they are. Through its alliance with the power of projection, it is the original cause of man's constant rebirth. He who is enveloped by this veiling power, wise or learned though he may be, clever, expert in the meaning of the scriptures, capable of wonderful achievements, will not be able to grasp the truth of the Self, even though the Guru and others clearly explain it in various ways. Being under the sway of that veiling power, he esteems things which bear the imprint of delusion and ignorance and achieves them. Even though he is taught, he who is enveloped by this veiling power still lacks the clear knowledge and understanding without which it cannot be removed; he always remains in doubt and comes to decisions contrary to the truth. At the same time, the power of projection makes him restless. Ignorance, indolence, inertia, sleepiness, omission of the discharge of duties, and stupidity are the characteristics of *tamas*. One who has these qualities does not comprehend anything but is like a sleeping man or a stone. Now, coming to *sattva*, whose colour is *white* : although this is quite clear like pure water, yet it gets murky if mixed with *rajas* and *tamas*. The Self shines through *sattva* just as the sun illumines the entire world of matter. Even from mixed *sattva* virtuous qualities result, such as modesty, *yama* and *niyama*, faith, devotion, and the desire for devotion, divine qualities and turning away from the unreal. From the clarity of pure *sattva* results Self-realization, supreme peace, never failing contentment, perfect happiness, abiding in the Self which is the fount of eternal Bliss. The undifferentiated power which is spoken of as a compound of the three *gunas* is the causal body of the soul. Its state is that of deep sleep in which all the sense organs and functions of the mind are at rest. In this state all perceptions cease and the mind in its subtle seed-like form experiences supreme bliss. This is borne out by the universal experience, " I slept soundly and knew nothing ".

' The above is a description of the non-Self. These things do not pertain to the Self : the body, the sense organs, the mind, the ego and its modes, happiness due to sense objects, the elements from ether downwards, and the whole world up to the undifferentiated Maya. All this is non-Self. From *mahat* (cosmic intelligence) down to the gross body, everything is the effect of Maya. Know these to be the non-Self. These are all unreal like a mirage in the desert.

'Now I am going to tell you about the real nature of the supreme Self, by realizing which man attains Liberation and is freed from bondage. That realization of "I" is indeed the Self which is experienced as "I-I" shining of its own accord, the absolute Being, the witness of the three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep, distinct from the five sheaths, aware of the mental modes in the waking and dream states and of their absence in the state of deep sleep. That Self sees all of its own accord but is never seen by any of these. It gives light to the intellect and ego but is not enlightened by them. It pervades the universe and by its light all this insentient universe is illumined, but the universe does not pervade it even to the slightest extent. In its presence the body, senses, mind, and intellect enter upon their functions as if commanded by it. By that unbroken knowledge all things from the ego to the body, objects and our experience of them, occur and are perceived. By it life and the various organs are set in motion. That inner Self, as the primeval Spirit, eternal, ever effulgent, full and infinite Bliss, single, Indivisible, whole and living, shines in everyone as the witnessing awareness. That Self in its splendour, shining in the cavity of the heart as the subtle, pervasive yet unmanifest ether, illumines this universe like the sun. It is aware of the modifications of the mind and ego, of the actions of the body, sense organs and life-breath. It takes their form as fire does that of a heated ball of iron; yet it undergoes no change in doing so. This Self is neither born nor dies, it neither grows nor decays, nor does it suffer any change. When a pot is broken the space inside it is not, and similarly when the body dies the Self in it remains eternal. It is distinct from the causal Maya and its effects. It is pure Knowledge. It illumines Being and Non-being alike and is without attributes. It is the witness of the intellect in the waking, dream, and deep sleep states. It shines as " I-I ", as ever-present, direct experience. Know that Supreme Self by means of a one-pointed mind and know " This 'I' is Brahman ". Thus through the intellect you may know the Self in yourself, by yourself, and by this means cross the ocean of birth and death and become one who has achieved his life purpose and ever remain as the Self.

' Mistaking the body or not-I for the Self or I is the cause of all misery, that is of all bondage. This bondage comes through ignorance of the cause of birth and death, for it is through ignorance that men regard these insentient bodies as real, mistaking them for the Self and sustaining them with sense objects and finally getting destroyed by them, just as the silkworm protects itself by the threads that it emits, but is finally destroyed by them. For those who mistake the rope for a serpent the integral pure effulgence of the pristine state is veiled by *tamas,* just as the dragon's head covers the sun in an eclipse, and as a result the Spirit (*Purusha*) forgets his reality. He is devoured by the dragon of delusion and, mistaking the non-self for the Self, is overpowered by mental states and submerged in the fathomless ocean of *samsara* full of the poison of sense-enjoyments and, now sinking, now rising, he finds no way of escape. Such are the torments caused by the projecting power of *rajas* together with the veiling of *tamas*. Just as the layers of clouds caused by the rays of the sun increase until they hide the sun itself, so the bondage of ego caused by ignorance in the Self expands until it hides that very Self. Just as frost and cold winds torment one on a wintry day when the sun is hidden by clouds, so too when *tamas* covers the Self the projecting power of *rajas* deludes the ignorant into mistaking the non-Self for the Self and torments them with many sorrows. So it is by these two powers alone that the Self has been brought into bondage. Of this tree of *samsara*, *tamas* is the seed, the " I am the body " idea is the shoot, desire is the young leaf, activity the water that makes it grow, the body the trunk, a man's successive lives the branches, the sense organs the twigs, sense objects the flowers, and diverse sorrows caused by activity the fruit. The ego is the bird sitting in the tree and enjoying its fruit.

' This bondage of the non-Self, born of ignorance, causing endless sorrow through birth, death, and old age, is wihout beginning, yet its complete destruction can be brought about in the way that I will tell you. Have faith in the Vedas and perform all the actions prescribed by them without seeking for any gain from doing so. This will give you purity of mind. With this pure mind meditate incessantly and by doing so you will directly know the Self. This Self-knowledge is the keen sword that cuts asunder the bonds. No other weapon or contrivance is capable of destroying them, nor wind nor fire nor countless actions.

' The Self is covered over by the five sheaths caused by the power of ignorance. It is hidden from sight like the water of a pond covered with weeds. When the weeds are removed the water is revealed and can be used by man to quench his thirst and cool him from the heat. In the same way, by process of elimination, you should with keen intellect discard the objective five sheaths from the Self as "not this, not this". Know the Self distinct from the body and from all forms, like a stalk of grass in its sheaths of leaf. Know it as internal, pure, single in its essence, unattached, with no duties to perform, ever blissful and self-effulgent. He who is Liberated realizes that all objective reality, which is superimposed on the Self as the idea of a serpent is on the rope, is really no other than the Self, and he himself is the Self. Therefore the wise aspirant should undertake discrimination between the Self and the non-Self. Of the five sheaths (food, life-breath, mind, intellect, and bliss), the gross body is created out of food, increasing by eating it and perishing when there is none. It is the sheath of food. Compounded of skin, blood, flesh, fat, marrow, excreta, and urine, it is most filthy. It has no existence before birth or after death but appears between them. It undergoes change every moment. There is no set law governing that change. It is an object, like a pot, is insentient and has a variety of forms. It is acted upon by other forces. The Self, on the other hand, is distinct from this body and is single, eternal, and pure. It is indestructible, though the body with its limbs is destroyed. The Self is the witness who knows the characteristics of the body, its modes of activity and its three states. It is self-aware and directs the body. Such being the contrast between the body and the Self, how can the body be the Self? The fool thinks of it as the Self. The man of wise action with some measure of discrimination, takes body and soul together for "I", but the really wise man who conducts the enquiry with firm discrimination knows himself always as the Supreme Brahman, the Being which is of its own nature. The "I am the body" idea is the seed of all sorrow. Therefore, just as you do not identify yourself with your shadow body, image body, dream body, or the body that you have in your imagination, cease also to associate the Self in any way with the body of skin, flesh, and bones. Make every effort to root out this error and, holding fast to the knowledge of Reality as the Absolute Brahman, destroy the mind and obtain supreme Peace. Then you will have no more birth. Even a learned scholar who perfectly understands the meaning of Vedanta has no hope of Liberation if, owing to delusion, he cannot give up the idea of the non-existent body as the Self.

'Now we come to the vital body of *prana,* which is the life-breath with the five organs of action. The aforementioned sheath of food enters upon its course of activity when filled by this vital force. It is nothing but a modification of air, and like air it enters into the body and comes out of it. It does not know its own desires and antipathies or those of others. It is eternally dependent on the Self. Therefore the vital body cannot be the Self.

'The mental sheath is the mind with its organs of knowledge. This is the cause of the wrong concept of the Self as "I" and "mine'. It is very powerful, being endowed with diversity of thought forms, beginning with the I-thought. It fills and pervades the vital sheath. The ever-blazing fire of the mental sheath is consuming this whole world, lit by the five sense organs as sacrificial priests, fed by sense objects as the fuel, and kept ablaze by the latent tendencies. There is no ignorance apart from the mind. It is the cause of the bondage of birth and death. With the emergence of the mind everything arises and with its subsidence everything ceases. In the dream state, in which there are no objects, the mind creates its dream world of enjoyers and others by its own powers. Similarly, all that it perceives in the waking state is its own display. It is the experience of all that nothing appears when the mind subsides in deep sleep. Therefore the bondage of *samsara* is only superimposed on the Self by the mind. Actually it has no reality. Just as the wind gathers the clouds in the sky and then disperses them, so the mind causes the bondage but also causes Liberation. The mind first creates in man an attachment to the body and to all sense objects, with the result that he is bound by his attachment like a beast tethered by a rope. Under the influence of *rajas* and *tamas* it is enfeebled and entangles man in desire for the body and objects, but under the influence of *sattva* it breaks away from *rajas* and *tamas* and attains to non-attachment and discrimination and rejects sense objects as though they were poison. Therefore the wise seeker after Liberation must first establish himself in discrimination and desirelessness. The mind is a great tiger roaming wild in the huge jungle of sense objects. Therefore aspirants should keep away from it. It is only the mind that conjures up before the Self subtle and gross objects and all the variations of body, caste, and station in life, qualities and actions, causes and effects. So doing, it tempts and deludes the Self, which is really unattached pure intelligence, binding it by the qualities of body, senses, and life and deluding it with the idea of " I " and " mine " in the fruits of action that it creates. By means of this false representation, the mind creates the myth of *samsara* (bondage) for the Spirit. This is the primal cause of the sorrow of birth and death which binds those who are subject to the faults of *rajas* and *tamas* and lack discrimination. Just as cloud masses revolve through the air, so does the whole world revolve through the delusion of the mind. Therefore those who know Reality declare that the mind is ignorance. He who seeks Liberation must examine his mind by his own efforts and once the mind is purified by such introspection Liberation is obtained and appears obvious and natural. Out of desire for Liberation you should root out all other desires, renounce activity and take to perpetual preoccupation with Truth (*sravana manana*) which will lead on to perpetual meditation (*nididhyasana*). Then alone can the waves of the mind be stilled. Therefore even this mind sheath cannot be the real Self, since it has a beginning and an end, and is subject to modifications and characterized by pain and grief, and is an object of perception.

'The intellect with the five organs of knowledge is the *vijnana maya* sheath and is also the cause of bondage for the Spirit. It is a modification of the Unmanifest, Beginningless Self which has assumed the form of the ego and conducts all activities through the reflected light of consciousness. It is the conscious agent of activity and its attributes are intelligence and actions. It regards the body and senses as "I" and their mode of life, duties, actions, and qualities as "mine". It performs good or evil actions as dictated by its previous tendencies and as a result of these actions attains to higher or lower regions and wanders there until it is attracted to re-birth in some enticing womb. It experiences the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep and the pleasant and painful fruits of its actions. Within this sheath of knowledge, the Self throbs as the self-effulgent Light, the supreme soul, homogeneous, the Truth, all pervasive, complete, immutable, the Supreme Lord. Yet the Self assumes limitations through the false superimposition of the intellect on it in this sheath, because this is close to it, and in fact the closest of its adjuncts. As a result it is deluded into thinking that it is this sheath. Just as a pot might seem to be different from its clay, so it imagines itself to be different from itself, to be the agent and the enjoyer and seems to be limited in such ways, although it is like the fire in a ball of hot iron, unaffcted by the shape of the ball'.

In answer to the Guru, the disciple says: 'Master, I accept your statement that, whether through delusion or not, the Supreme Self has come to regard itself as the ego. But since this superimposition of the ego-concept is beginningless it cannot be supposed to have an end either. How, then, can there be Liberation? But if there is no Liberation the ego-concept becomes eternal and bondage also becomes eternal. Pray enlighten me on this point.'

To this the Master replies: 'That is a good question, my learned disciple. Now listen with one-pointed mind to my explanation. Whatever has been conjured up by delusion must be examined in the pure light of reason. Things appear real as long as the delusion lasts and perish as unreal and non-existent as soon as it passes, just like illusion of a serpent seen in a piece of rope and appearing real as long as the illusion lasts. Really the Self is unattached, actionless, characterless, immutable, formless. Being-Consciousness-Bliss, the Inner Witness. It has no sort of relationship with anything. To think that it has is a mere delusion like the appearance blue in the sky. The false attitude of the ego to the Self is due to the relationship with the beginningless false vehicle, but even this sense of relationship is the result of delusion. Although this attitude of the ego to the Self is wihout a beginning, that does not make it real. Just as water becomes clear as soon as the dirt is removed from it, so is it with the Self when the effects of the ego and its false adjuncts are dropped from it and ignorance disappears through discrimination between Self and non-Self. Then appears the true self-effulgent Knowledge of the Oneness of God and Self.

'The discarding of the beginningless ignorance with its cause and effects and bodies and states is like the ending of non-existence before being manifest[1] or the ending of a dream when the waking state supervenes. Liberation from the bondage of the false ego concept can never come about except through knowledge acquired by discrimination between the Self and the non-Self. Therefore you also must discriminate in order to remove the non-existence ego. Even this intellectual sheath is subject to change, insentient, a part of a whole, and an object of perception and therefore it cannot be the Atman. Can the non-eternal ever become eternal?

'Coming now to the sheath of Bliss: this is only a modification of ignorance on which the Supreme Self is reflected. It reveals itself at will in all three states, waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, and yields the different modes of bliss from perceiving, obtaining, and experiencing things. It is experienced effortlessly by all to some extent in deep sleep, but *sadhus* who have practised discrimination experience the bliss of it perpetually without effort and in its fullness in the deep sleep state. However, even this sheath of bliss cannot be the Supreme Self, since it is subject to change and possesses attributes. It is the effect of past good deeds and a modification of *Prakriti* and it abides in the other sheaths which are themselves also modifications. If, by the rejection of false ideas, all five sheaths are eliminated, the Self alone is experienced as "I-I". It alone remains, whole and Self-aware, distinct from the five sheaths, the witness of the three states, self-effulgent, immutable, untainted, everlasting Bliss. It is like Devadatta[1] who neither is the pot nor partakes of its nature but is only the witness. The Self is not the five sheaths, which are objects, nor does it partake of their nature, but is a mere witness of them.'

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[1] e.g. the shape of a pot in clay before the clay manifests as a pot.

[1] A name taken simply as an illustration.

To this the disciple replies : 'Oh Master, after rejecting the five sheaths as unreal, I find nothing remaining except the void, so what is there to be known as "I-I", as the truth of the Self ?'

The Guru replies : 'Oh learned one, you are skilful in discrimination and have spoken the truth. The rule of enquiry or perception is : "That which is perceived by something else has the latter for its witness. When there is no agent of perception there can be no question of the thing having been perceived at all." Accordingly, the Self, as awareness, cognizes not only itself but also the existence of the ego with its various modifications of the transient names and forms and their nescience. Therefore it is the Self which is their witness. Beyond it there is nothing to know. It is aware of itself through its own effulgence and so is its own witness. It is single and immutable in the waking, dream, and deep sleep states. It makes itself known as Being-Consciousness-Bliss and is self-effulgent in the heart as "I-I". Through your keen intellect, know this eternal blissful awareness to be the Self or "I". The fool takes the reflection of the sun in the water of a pot to be the sun ; the wise man eliminates pot, water, and reflection and knows the sun in the sky as it really is, single and unaffected, but illuminating all three. In the same way the fool, through error and misperception, identifies himself with the ego and its reflected light experienced through the medium of the intellect. The wise and discriminating man eliminates body, intellect, and reflected light of consciousness and probes deeply into his real Self which illuminates all three while remaining uniform in the ether of the heart. Thereby he realizes the eternal witness which is Absolute Knowlege, illuminating all. It is subtle and all-pervasive, neither being nor non-being, with neither inside nor outside, and is self-effulgent. Realizing this, he is set free from the impurities of the ego. He has no more birth or death. He is free from sorrow and becomes the immutable essence of established Bliss. The *Jnani* who, through experience, has realized his Self to be the Brahman as It really is, as Truth, Knowledge, endless Bliss, the Single Essence, eternal, boundless, pure, unattached, and impartible, not only does not return to bondage but is that Brahman Itself, the *Advaita*. That is to say that knowledge of the identity of Brahman and Self is the prime cause of release from bondage. For him who aspires after Liberation there is no other way of release from bondage but knowledge of the identity of Brahman and Self. Therefore you too, by your own experience, know your Self as always " I am Brahman ", ' Brahman am I ", " Brahman alone am I ".

' Since there is nothing other than Brahman, It is the supreme *Advaita*. The pot which is made of clay, has no other form than that of the clay. No one can show the pot except by means of the clay. The pot is only a delusion of the imagination and exists only in name, since it has no other reality than that of the clay. Similarly the whole universe is a superimposition (of form) on the Brahman although it seems to be separate from It. The substratum of Brahman appears through the delusion of the superimposition. The latter is really non-existent, like the serpent seen in the rope. The manifest is only an illusion. The silver seen in the substratum of the mother-of-pearl has no existence apart from it but is the mother-of-pearl itself. Similarly, manifestation has no existence apart from its substratum of Brahman. Whatever, Oh *sadhu*, appears to the deluded as the manifested world of names and forms, on account of their ignorance and wrong knowledge, whatever objectivity appears as real, all this, when truly realized as it is, is the effect of Brahman, and is superimposed on the substratum of Brahman. Only owing to delusion it appears to be real and it is Brahman, its substratum, which appears to be superimposed on it. Really all these names and forms are nothing at all. They are a myth pure and simple and have no exixtence apart from their substratum of Brahman. They are nothing but the Being-Consciousness-Bliss which neither rises nor sets. If it were contended that the manifested world has any existence apart from Brahman, that would impair the infinity of Brahman. It would also contradict the authority of the Atharva Veda which declares in unequivocal terms "All this world is indeed Brahman". It would also make out the Omniscient Lord as having uttered a falsehood when He said: "All these elements are not in Me. I, the Indivisible Whole, am not in them" The *Mahatmas*, who are true *sadhus*, would not countenance these contradictions. Furthermore, the outer world does not exist in the state of deep sleep, and, if investigated, it is seen to be unreal, like the dream world. Therefore any such statement made by fools as that the manifested world has its own existence apart from its substratum of Brahman is as false as the idle words of a man talking in his sleep. It is Brahman Itself which shines everywhere, uniform and complete. This truth the Enlightened (*Jnanis*) know as the One without a second, formless, inactive, unmanifest, never to be destroyed, having no beginning or end. It is Truth, absolute Purity, the essence of pure Bliss. It contains none of the internal differences which are the creation of Maya. It is eternal, continuous, immaculately pure, spotless, nameless, undifferentiated, self-effulgent, beyond the triads of knower-knowledge-known, absolute, pure, unbroken Consciouness, ever shining.

'My beloved disciple, this Self can neither be held nor given up. It is beyond perception and utterance. It is immeasurable without beginning or end. This Infinity of Brahman is my Self and yours and that of other individuls. Great texts such as "That thou art" reveal the identity between the Brahman known as "That" and the individual known as "thou". The identity is not shown by the literal meaning of "that" and "thou". The literal meaning of "that" is *Ishvara's* Maya which is the cause of the universe, and the literal meaning of "thou" is the five sheaths of the ego. These are non-existent superimpositions, the cause and effect of non-existent phantoms. Their qualities are opposite to each other, like the sun and the glow-worm, the king and the slave, the ocean and the well, Mt. Meru and the atom. There can be no identity between Brahman and the individual in the literal sense of "that" and "thou", and it is not in this way that the scriptures postulate the identity.

'(The science of the secondary meaning of words is called *lakshana* and is of three kinds. The first is called *jaha-ajahal-lakshana*. In the first the primary sense of a term is rejected and the secondary retained; in the second the primary sense is retained and the secondary rejected; in the third the primary sense is only partly rejected and partly retained) [1] Of these three, we can omit the first two as being of no use for our purpose and take the third.

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[1] This passage in brackets is inserted by the editor.

According to this, in a text such as " He is that Devadatta " we eliminate the contradictory aspects of Devadatta manifested at different places and times and concentrate on the identity of Devadatta himself irrespective of place and time. Similarly, in the text in question, we eliminate the non-existent, objective, contradictory attributes of " that " and " thou " as " not this " and " not this " (am I). You can do this on the authority of the Vedas which reject the duality superimposed on Brahman and also by your own intelligence. If attributes such as a shield for a royal person and a badge of ownership for a slave are removed, both alike belong to the genus man. Similarly the text (about " that " and " thou ") declares the natural identity between *Ishvara* and the individual in their residuary aspect of Consciousness apart from the forms of *Ishvara* and individual. There is no contradiction in this, since Consciousness is the unbroken, single essence of both. Through the touch of the *Mahatmas*, know this blessed identity of Brahman and Self by rejecting as " not I " the non-existent body. Know by your own clear intellect that Brahman is your Self, self-existent, subtle as the ether, ever radiant, true, awareness, bliss, indivisible and whole.

' Truly " thou art That ", the Self that is non-dual Brahman, pure and exquisitely serene, the Truth apart from which nothing is. This is so because, even in this waking state, the world and the body with its sense and the ego which, owing to ignorance, seems to be separate from the Self, and the life breath are pure myth. " Thou art That " because in the dream state time, space and objects and the knower of them are all created by sleep and are purely illusory. " Thou art That " because this whole world emanates from Brahman, which alone IS, and is Brahman

Itself, just as pots come from clay and are clay itself and indeed are made of clay. That Brahman is untouched by the six-fold changes of birth, youth, growth, old age, decay, and death. It has no caste or custom, tribe or family, name or form. It is without attributes. It has neither merit nor demerit, neither mental nor physical afflictions. It is free from the six evils of hunger, thirst, sorrow, delusion, old age, and death. It has no time, space, or objectivity. It cannot be described by words. The gross mind cannot reach it. It can be comprehended only by the eye of wisdom and experienced in the heart of the Yogi, in his very being, not by the use of any organ. It is the substratum of the illusory world that seems to be superimposed on it. It is the cause of the emanation, preservation, and re-absorption of the world. It is the Supreme Cause, which itself has no cause; all the worlds of name and form are its effects, and yet it is distinct from cause and effect. It is distinct from being and non-being. Although, owing to delusion, it appears like gold in its varying aspects of name and form and its modifications, yet it has no name or form, no attributes or modifications. It contains no disequilibrium. It is still, like a waveless ocean. It is eternal, formless, spotless, incomparable, ever free, indestructible, pure, without beginning. It is that beyond which there is nothing. It is complete, not compounded of elements or of parts. It is Being-Consciousness-Bliss, uniform, impartible Bliss. It is single in essence. That Brahman which is all this, " That thou art ". Meditate on the truth of this in your heart continuously, without break, calmly, with reason and keen intellect. Thus you will obtain essential Knowledge free from doubt, as clear as water in the palm of the hand. Knowledge in the body with its faculties is like a king in the midst of his vast army, and that Knowledge is the Self and is Brahman. Know this by discrimination. Regard all other separate things as This Itself and remain ever as this Self. Thus remaining, you will attain Bliss and peace of Being.

'In the cavity of the Intellect is the single truth of Brahman, distinct from being and non-being. He who remains eternally as that Truth itself is never drawn back again to birth in the body.

'Although a man knows this to be true, the feeling of "I am the doer", "I am the enjoyer" arises strongly in him owing to the bondage (*samsara*) caused by the mighty. beginningless *vasanas* (innate tendencies) which often obstruct him. Curb these tendencies the moment they arise, by your own efforts, by abiding firmly in the Self, by a vision of the Self. Sages such as Vasishta have declared that the withering of the *vasanas* is indeed Liberation. Realization of the Self as It is does not come through tendencies to worldly or sense activity or through prolonged study of the scriptures. To those who seek deliverance from the prison or ocean of *samsara*, the above threefold tendencies are iron fetters say those who are realized. Therefore attachment to the world, the scriptures, and the body must be given up and it must be fully realized that the body is sustained by the force of *prarabdha* (past *karma*). You should therefore courageously renounce these attachments and strive energetically to overcome *tamas* by the power of *sattva* and *rajas*, then *rajas* through mixed *sattva*, then mixed *sattva* through pure *sattva*. You should do this with a firm and calm mind, helped by the great texts such as "That thou art" which proclaim the identity between the individual self and Brahman. Seek by reasoning and experience to get rid of the *vasanas,* so that you may have firm faith in Brahman and completely root out from the body and senses the feeling of "I" and "mine" which constantly appears as a result of the superimposition. This is to be done by firm abidance in the One Indivisible Self in the Heart and by meditating on the unceasing experience of knowledge of the unity of Brahman and Self thus: "I am not the ego. I am the unceasing Perfection of Brahman experienced as I, the Witness of thought forms." This meditation must be persisted in until the ego sense is completely rooted out from the body, without a vestige, and the world of individuals appears like a dream. He who meditates has no work to do except beg and perform his natural functions. He must never forget the Self by giving room for worldly speech and sense objects. Agil wood' is fragrant by nature, but its fragrance is masked by a bad smell when it comes into contact with water and is revealed when it is rubbed. Constant practice of meditation is this rubbing. The latent tendencies of the mind are removed only to the extent to which it abides in the Self. It is by such constant abidance in the Self that the mind of the Yogi is destroyed. And by the destruction of the mind the outer non-self tendencies of the heart are utterly eradicated. Then the experience of the Supreme Self, which was formerly veiled by the magic of the *vasanas,* shines forth of its own accord like the fragrance of uncontaminated sandal paste.

'In whatever way it may be examined, the ego with all its faculties turns out to be unreal, a momentary limitation, inert, insentient and incapable of realizing the One. The Supreme Self is different from both gross and subtle bodies. It is the witness of the ego with its faculties and exists always, even in deep sleep. The texts say: "It is birthless and deathless ". It is immutable and distinct alike from being and non-being. The ego can never be the real Self, the true meaning of, " I ". Keep aloof from this impure body as you would from an outcaste. Give up the sense of " I " in the gross body and all attachments due to the mind, attachments to name and form, tribe and family, caste and social order. Give up also the attachment to the subtle body and its nature and sense of being the doer. Find the feeling of " I " in the Self, which is Truth, Knowledge, and Eternity. Just as the air in a pot is part of the air outside, so conceive of the Self as that self-effulgent Brahman which is the substratum of all, in which the world is seen reflected like a city in a mirror or like shadows cast. Think of yourself as " That I am ", without parts, without form, without activity, without duality, unending, Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Know the Self as it really is, Give up this false physical self just as an actor gives up his role and remains himself. By knowledge acquired through Self-enquiry discard both microcosm and macrocosm as unreal and, abiding in the unbroken stillness, remain ever at rest in the perfect Bliss as Unqualified Brahman. Thus obtain supreme Peace, which is the purpose of life.

'Though various obstacles contribute to the bondage of the soul, the primary cause of them all is the rising of the false ego-sense. It is through the superimposition of the ego on the Self that this bondage of birth, death and sorrow has come upon you who are by nature Being-Consciousness-Bliss, of boundless glory, eternal, single in essence, unchanging. By nature you have no such bondage. Just as there can be no sound health so long as the effect of a little poison in the body continues, so there can be no Liberation so long as identification with the ego continues. Knowledge of the Identity of the Self with Brahman is clearly revealed as soon as the ego is completely destroyed without residue, together with the illusion of multiplicity caused by the veiling of *tamas*. Therefore, by investigation into the nature of the unattached Self, discover the Truth of your own Self, complete, perfect, self-effulgent and ever-blissful. He who is freed from the ego shines eternally as the Self, like the full moon, radiant when delivered from the dragon's head (of eclipse). In the field of the heart the terrible cobra of the ego is coiled round the Bliss of the Self to which it denies access with the threefold hood of the *gunas*. These three fearful heads of the serpent of ego are to be severed, in accordance with the scriptures, only by great courage with the mighty sword of actual experience of the Self. He who has thus destroyed the three-hooded serpent can obtain and enjoy the vast treasure of the Bliss of Brahman. Therefore you, too, give up the I-sense in the ego, which appears like being and assumes that it is the doer, whereas it is only the reflected light of the Self. Turn inwards all the thought-forms that adhere to the ego. He is an enemy of yours, so kill him with the sword of Knowledge. He has been harming you like a thorn in your throat while eating. Give up all desires in order to realize your state as the Supreme Self. Enjoy the kingdom of the Self, be perfect, be still in the stillness of the immutable state of Brahman.

'The ego may in this way be killed, but if thought is given to it even for a moment it revives and engages in activity, driving a man before it as the wind drives winter clouds. Remember that he who associates the I-sense with the body and its faculties is bound while he who does not is Liberated.

'Thoughts of sense objects create a sense of differentiation and thereby cause the bondage of birth and death. Therefore no quarter should be given to the ego, who is the enemy who has such thoughts. Just as a withered lime tree puts out new leaves if watered, so the ego revives through thoughts of sense objects. The increase of effects makes their seed or cause flourish, while the decay of effects destroys their cause also; therefore you should first destroy the effects. If thoughts, which are the effect, flourish, the ego with its tendencies, which is the cause, also flourishes. From thoughts, outer activities arise, and from these two together the tendencies develop and create the bondage to which souls are subject. In order to escape from this, thoughts, activity, and tendencies must all three be abolished. The best way of doing this is to hold firmly to the view that: "All this that appears as separate names and forms is Brahman Itself." This view must be held to at all times and places and in all states. Firm holding to this attitude reduces activity, and this results in a decline of thoughts, which in turn destroys the latent tendencies. Destruction of the latent tendencies is indeed Deliverance. Therefore develop this helpful tendency to regard everything as Brahman. The result will be that the frail tendencies of the ego will disappear like darkness before the sun. Just as darkness with all its dismal effects disappears before the rising sun, so bondage with all its sorrows will pass away without a trace when the sun of advaitic experience rises. Therefore regard all objective manifestation as Brahman and hold firm in a state of peace (*samadhi*) and inner and outer beatitude (*nischala bhāva*) as long as the bondage due to your past destiny (*karma*) lasts. While doing so, always remember: "That immovable Bliss of Brahman Itself am I."

'This abidance as Brahman must never be relaxed, for if it is, a false notion of Truth will result which is indeed death, as says Bhagavan Sri Sanath Sujatha, the Son of Brahma. Such a false notion of truth due to swerving from the State of abidance in Truth introduces delusion; from delusion arises the attribution of "I" to the ego and its objects, from this bondage, and from bondage sorrow. Therefore there is no greater misfortune for the Enlightened than wrong understanding and swerving from Reality. Just as water-plants, though removed from a sheet of water, do not stay at the side but cover it over again, so if a man is exteriorized, even though he may be enlightened, if Maya (illusion) once begins to shroud him he will be swayed in numerous ways by the false intellect. This is due to his lapse from watchfulness, his forgetting of his true state, his going out towards sense objects. He is like a man swayed and dominated by a lewd woman, of whom he is enamoured. If, through wrong understanding and swerving from Reality, a man's consciousness slips even the least bit from the target of his own Self, it will enter into outer things and leap from one to another as a ball slips from your hand and rolls down a flight of stairs. It will begin to consider outer experiences good for it and thence will arise the desire to enjoy them. That will lead to participation in them, which in turn will destroy his abidance in the Self, with the result that he will sink into depths from which he can never more arise and will be destroyed. Therefore there is no greater danger in Brahman-consciousness than wrong understanding, which means swerving from one's true state. Only he who has the eternal state of consciousness (*nishta*) obtains Realization (*siddhi*) and so renounces the manifestation (*sankalpa*) born of *pramāda* (wrong understanding) and of relaxation from practice. Such wrong understanding is the cause of all spiritual decline (*anartha*). Therefore be the *swarupa nishta* who abides ever in the Self.

'He who has attained Liberation in the state of Brahman while still alive will shine so in his bodiless state also. It says in the Yajur Veda: "He who has even the slightest sense of differentiation is always afraid!" He who sees any attributes of differentiation, however small, in the Absolute Brahman will for that reason remain in a state of terror. He who locates the I-sense in the insentient body and its objects, so despised by the various scriptures and their commentaries, will experience sorrow after sorrow like the sinner who commits unlawful acts. We can see from the discrimination between thieves and honest men that he who is devoted to truth escapes misfortune and achieves success, while he who is devoted to falsehood perishes.[1] We also see that shutting out external objects gives the mind a clear perception of the Self, which in turn results in the destruction of the bondage of *samsara*. Therefore the abandonment of all objective reality is the way to Deliverance. If a man discriminates between Truth and non-truth in quest of Liberation and discovers the Truth of the Supreme Lord through the authority of the scriptures, will he then, like a child, run after non-existent chimera, knowing them to be the cause of his destruction? None would do so. Therefore he who discriminates must also renounce and cease to seek after externals which feed those lower tendencies that cause bondage. He should erase all sorrows due to ignorance by the experience " I am that Supreme Brahman alone, which is Being-Consciousness-Bliss " and should abide ever in his true state, which is Bliss. One who is in the waking state is not dreaming and one who is in the dream state is not waking; the two are mutually exclusive. Similarly, one who is not attached to the body has Deliverance and one who is has not.

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[1] This refers to trial by ordeal, placing a hot iron in the hand of a suspected thief, who is burnt if guilty but not if innocent.

' A liberated being is one who sees himself as single and the witness both within and without the world of things moving and unmoving, as the substratum of all. By his universal consciousness experienced through the subtle mind he has removed all the vehicles and he remains as the Absolute Whole. Only such a one is liberated, and he has no attachment to the body. There is no other means of Liberation than this blessed realization that " All is one Self ". And this " All is One " attitude is to be obtained by perpetual abidance in the Self and rejection of objects without attachment to them. How can a man reject objective reality if he has the " I am the body " idea and is attached to outer things and always performing actions dictated by them ? It is impossible. Therefore renounce all actions based on *karma* and *dharma* and, with knowledge of the *tattva*, abide permanently in the Self. Prepare your mind for immersion in perpetual Bliss. This effort will enable you to reject objective reality. It is in order to obtain this *sarvātmabhāva* (attitude that all is the Self) that the scriptural text " *Shānto dāntha* " (calm and self-controlled) prescribes *nirvikalpa samadhi* (ecstatic trance) for those seekers who have taken a vow of *chāndrāyana* (regulation of the increase and decrease of food intake through two successive fortnights) and have also performed *sravana* (hearing of the text "That thou art"). A scholar who has not had a firm experience of *nirvikalpa samadhi*, however learned he may be, will not be capable of destroying the ego and its objective reality together with all the accumulated tendencies of his previous births.

'It is the projecting power of Maya together with its veiling power which unites the soul with the ego, the cause of delusion, and, through its qualities, keeps a man vainly dangling like a ghost. If the veiling power is destroyed the Self will shine of itself, and there will be no room either for doubt or obstruction. Then the projecting power also will vanish, or even if it persists, its persistence will only be apparent. But the projecting power cannot disappear unless the veiling power does. Only when the subject is perfectly distinguished from objects, like milk from water, will the veiling power be destroyed.

'Pure discrimination born of perfect knowledge distinguishes the subject from the object and destroys the delusion due to ignorance. The man of discrimination distinguishes the Real from the unreal, reasoning as follows: "Like iron combining with fire, the intellect combines with ignorance to obtain a fictitious unity with the Self which is Being and project itself as the world of seer, sight, and seen. Therefore all these appearances are false, like a delusion, dream, or imagination. All sense objects from the ego down to the body are also unreal, being modifications of *Prakriti*, subject to change from moment to moment. Only the Self never changes. The Self, distinct from the body, distinct from being and non-being, the witness of the intellect and the meaning implied by the I-sense, single, eternal, indivisible, impartible, is indeed the Supreme Self of eternal Bliss incarnate."

'In this way he discriminates between Truth and untruth and, in doing so, discovers the true Self. With the eye of illumination, he obtains actual realization of the Self and experiences this "I" as the impartible Knowledge of Absolute Brahman. Thereby he destroys the veiling power and the false knowledge and other sorrows that have been created by the projecting power, just as the fear of a snake falls away as soon as one perceives the reality of the rope (that one took to be a snake). Being freed from these ills, he obtains abidance in a state of perfect peace. Thus, only when one obtains realization of the Supreme Identity through *nirvikalpa samadhi* will ignorance be destroyed without vestige and the knot of the heart loosed. How can there be any seed of *samsara* still remaining in the liberated soul who has realized the Supreme Identity with the utter destruction of the forest of ignorance by the fire of knowledge of Oneness of Self and Brahman? He has no more *samsara*, no more rebirth and death. Therefore the discriminating soul must know the *Atma tattva* in order to be freed from the bondage of *samsara*.

'All forms of creation and imagination appearing as you, I, this, etc., are a result of the impurity of the intellect. They seem to exist in the Absolute, Attributeless Supreme Self, but in the state of absorption (*samadhi*) and experience of Brahman they cease to exist. Also the Self seems to be divisible owing to differences in the vehicles, but if these are removed it shines single and complete. Perpetual concentration is necessary in order to dissolve these differentiations in the Absolute. The wasp's grub that renounces all activity and meditates constantly upon the wasp becomes a wasp, and in the same way the soul that longs for Brahman with one-pointed meditation becomes the Supreme Self through the power of its meditation and perpetual abidance in Brahman, in the Absolute Stillness. So persevere constantly in meditation on Brahman and as a result the mind will be cleansed of the stain of the three *gunas* until it becomes perfectly pure and resumes its state, when it is ripe for dissolution in Brahman like salt in water. It is like gold being cleansed of its alloy and returning to the purity of its true state through being put in a furnace. Only in such purity of mind can *nirvikalpa samadhi* be obtained, and therewith the essential bliss of Identity. Through this *samadhi* all the knots of the *vasanas* are loosened and all past *karmas* destroyed so that the Light of the Self is experienced without effort, inwardly and outwardly, and at all places and times. Thus the subtle Brahman is experienced in the single and subtle mental mode of *samadhi* by those of subtle intellect, and in no other way, by no gross outlook, can it be experienced. Similarly the Sage who has inner and outer senses controlled, in solitude and equanimity, obtains experience of the all-pervading Self through perpetual concentration and thus, getting rid of all mental creations caused by the darkness of ignorance, becomes actionless and without attributes and remains eternally in the Bliss of Brahman Himself. Only he is liberated from the bondage of *samsara* who, having obtained *nirvikalpa samadhi*, perceives the mind, senses, and objects, the ears and sound, etc., to inhere in the Self, and not he who speaks only from theoretical wisdom. Brahman can be clearly experienced without any barrier only through *nirvikalpa samadhi*, for apart from that the mental mode always fluctuates, leading from one thought to another. Therefore control the senses and mind and abide firmly in the Self. Utterly destroy the darkness of ignorance and its cause through experience of the One

Self and abide ever as the Self. Reflection on truth heard is a hundred times more potent than hearing it, and abiding in it is a hundred thousand times more potent than reflection on it. What limit, then, can there be to the potency obtained through *nirvikalpa samadhi* ?

'Restraint of speech, not accepting anything from others, conquest of desire, renunciation of action, continence, and solitude are all aids in the early stages of this *samadhi yoga*. Solitude helps to quieten the senses, and thereby the mind also. Stillness of mind destroys the tendencies and thereby gives perpetual experience of the essential Bliss of Brahman. Therefore the *yogi* must always exert himself to restrain the consciousness (*chit*). The breathing must subside into the mind, the mind into the intellect, the intellect into the witness, and by knowing the witness as the fulness of the Unqualified Supreme Self perfect Peace is obtained.

'He who meditates becomes that aspect of his being to which the consciousness is drawn : if to the body, he becomes body, if to the senses he becomes senses, if to the life-breath, he becomes that, if to the mind or intellect, he becomes mind or intellect. Therefore, rejecting all these, the consciousness should subside and obtain peace in Brahman, which is Eternal Bliss.

'He who, through desire for Liberation, has attained perfect freedom from desires is able to abide in the Self and get rid of all attachments, inner as well as outer, and he alone achieves inner and outer renunciation. Moreover, it is only he who is without desires, who has perfect non-attachment and so obtains *samadhi* and through *samadhi* the certainty that he has won to *tattva jnana*, which brings Liberation. He who has attained Liberation has attained eternal Bliss. Therefore complete non-attachment is the only path for him who aspires to the bliss of union with the bride of Liberation. Non-attachment combined with Self-knowledge wins the kingdom of Deliverance. Non-attachment and Knowledge are like the wings of a bird needed for ascending the mount of Deliverance, and if either of them is lacking it cannot be attained. Therefore renounce the desire for things, which is like poison; give up attachment to caste, group, social position, and destiny; cease to locate the I-sense in the body; be ever centred upon the Self; for in truth you are the Witness, the stainless Brahman.

'The Self in the form of Brahman, witness of all finite beings, self-effulgent, shines eternally as "I-I" in the sheath of *Vijnana*, distinct from the five sheaths. Being experienced as "I", it shines as the true form of the Self, the direct experience of the great texts. Fix your heart constantly on this Brahman, which is the goal. Let the senses remain in their centres; keep the body steady by remaining indifferent to it; and practise the meditation "I am Brahman, Brahman am I", allowing no other thoughts to come in. Gradually still the mind by practice of the unbroken flow of beatitude. Realize the identity of Self and Brahman and drink the nectar of Brahman Bliss in eternal joy. What use are base thoughts of body and world, which are non-Self? Give up these non-Self thoughts, which are the cause of all sorrow. Hold firm to the Self, the seat of Bliss, as "I" and no longer ascribe the I-sense to the ego and its attributes. Be as indifferent to them as to pots and pictures and meditate perpetually on the Self, which is the cause of Liberation.

'A pot, a huge earthen jar for storing grain, and a needle are all separate things, but when they are cast away there remains only the single expanse of ether. Something which is falsely imagined to exist on the substratum of something else has no reality apart from the real thing, just as a snake imagined in a piece of rope has not. Wave, foam, bubble, and whirlpool if examined are all found to be simply water. Pots of various sizes and shapes are nothing other than clay, and in fact are clay. Similarly, you should reject the limitations of body, senses, life-breath, mind, and ego, which are merely illusory. Only fools perceive and speak of "I", "you", "it" and so forth, out of delusion and folly, being drunk with the wine of illusion (Maya). Even their perception of multiplicity is contained in Being-Consciousness-Bliss, in the perfect purity of Self which, as Brahman, shines as one indivisible whole, like the vast ether. All superimpositions such as body and ego-sense, from Brahma down to a boulder, which are perceived as the world, are really nothing other than the One Self. They are merely the display of *Prakriti* and the Self as pure Being. The one supreme Self, unbroken and homogeneous, exists as east, west, south, and north, inner and outer, up and down, everywhere. He himself is Brahma; he himself is Vishnu, Siva, Indra, gods and men, and everything. What more is there to say? Everything from (the threefold appearance of) Personal God, individual being, and world down to the minutest atom is merely a form of Brahman. In order to remove the superimposition of *mithya* (the false), the scriptures declare "there is no duality at all" (Brahman is One without a second); therefore you yourself are the non-dual Brahman, spotless like the ether, without inner or outer, without attributes, changeless, timeless, without dimensions or parts. What else is there to know? The scriptures declare: "So long as the individual regards the corpse of his body as 'I' he is impure and subject to various ills such as birth, death, and sickness", "Remove all objective reality superimposed on the Self by illusion and know yourself as pure, immutable Siva; then you will become Liberated, the Brahman which is without action and is impartible perfection." The Enlightened who have attained Supreme Knowledge shine as Being-Consciousness-Bliss, homogeneous Brahman, having utterly renounced objective reality. Therefore you, too, reject your gross, impure body and the subtle body that wavers like the wind and the I-sense in them and regard yourself as Being-Consciousness-Bliss, as declared by Vedanta, and thus remain ever as the very Brahman.

'The scriptures declare that: "Duality is of the nature of illusion (Maya) and only non-duality is the Supreme Truth." It is our experience that the diversity created by the consciousness ceases to exist in deep sleep, in which the consciousness is absorbed in bliss. Those who are wise and discriminating know that the proverbial serpent has no existence apart from the substratum of the rope, nor the water of a mirage apart from the barren ground. It is our experience that when the mentality assumes the nature of the Self and becomes one with the Attributeless Supreme Self, mental manifestation ceases. All these magical creations which the illusion of the mind sets forth as the universe are found to have no real existence and become untrue when the Truth behind them is realized as Brahman Itself. In the non-dual Brahman the threefold reality of seer, sight, and seen does not exist. It is the substratum into which ignorance, the root cause of the illusion of multiplicity, is absorbed, like darkness into light. Like oceans that endure to the end of the cycle of time, the

Truth of Brahman remains single, complete, absolute purity, inactivity, unqualified, changeless, formless. Where, then, can be talk of duality or diversity in the homogeneity of Brahman? When in a state of *samadhi,* the Enlightened *Jnani* experiences in the heart as "I-I" the homogeneous completeness of that Brahman which is eternal, the bliss of knowledge incomparable, unattached, formless, inactive, unqualified, immutable, characterless, nameless, and free from bondage. It is still, like the ether—and yet nothing can be compared to it. It has no cause and is not an effect. It is beyond imagining. It is to be achieved only through realization on the authority of the Vedanta. The truth of it abides in the heart and is experienced constantly as I. It is free from birth, old age, and death. In itself it is eternal. It is eternal, tranquil, and undifferentiated; it is vast and still like a calm ocean without a shore. In order not to fall back into *samsara,* practise *nirvikalpa samadhi* by concentration on Brahman, which is experienced in the heart as our own radiant Self free from all limitations and as Being-Consciousness-Bliss. This will destroy the individual consciousness which is the cause of all error, and thus you can unravel the knot of the heart which causes the ills of birth and death. Thus will you obtain the glory of unbroken bliss being Self-realized and by doing so achieve the purpose of human life, a boon so rare to obtain.

'The Self-realized Yogi, knowing his true nature, the great Mahatma, shows his wisdom by rejecting his body, regarding it as a corpse, as the mere shadow of his being, existing only owing to past destiny. Such a great Mahatma knows himself to be the unbroken bliss of the Self. He has utterly consumed the body and its attributes in the fire of Brahman, which is eternal, immutable Truth. Having thus consumed his body and remaining with his consciousness ever immersed in the ocean of bliss which is Brahman, he himself is eternal Knowledge and Bliss. How then should he care to nourish or sustain his body or be attached to it, feeding as he does on the eternal nectar of Brahman, inwardly and outwardly? Just as the cow does not care about the garland round its neck, so too he does not care whether the body, bound by the strings of past *karma*, lives or dies. So you too reject this inert, impure body and realize the pure and eternal Self of wisdom. Give no more thought to the body. Who would care to take back what he has once vomited?

'Knowledge of a mirage keeps one away from it, and ignorance that it is a mirage leads one to seek it. Similarly, knowledge leads to the path of return and ignorance to worldly pursuits. The achievement of Self-knowledge or Self-realization frees a man from the ills arising from error and brings him eternal content and unequalled bliss eternally experienced; ignorance, on the other hand, pushes him into objective experience of error and misery. How, then should the wise man who has severed the knot of the heart with the sword of wisdom continue to perform the various vain actions which occupied him during the time of his delusion? What cause could induce him to activity?

'Knowledge leads to non-attachment; solitude and abandonment of home lead to Knowledge; the bliss of Self-experience and tranquillity results from cessation of activity. If these results are not obtained step by step, the previous steps become invalid. The perfection of non-attachment is when previous tendencies to seek enjoyment no longer arise. The perfection of Knowledge is when the I-sense no longer pertains to the body. The perfection of solitude is when thoughts subside through perpetual striving and, dissolving in Brahman, no longer turn outwards.

'Do not differentiate between Self and Brahman or between world and Brahman. On the authority of the Vedas realize "I am Brahman". Attain the pure beatitude of Oneness and establish the pure consciousness immovably in Brahman so that you become dissolved in Brahman. Being ever Brahman, renounce objective reality and let your enjoyments be witnessed or known by others, like the state of sleeping children. Renounce activity and, with the purity of Primal Being, abide in eternal enjoyment of pure Bliss. Although your mind is dissolved and you are like one forgetful of the world, remain ever awake, and yet like one who is not awake. Remain indifferent to the body and senses and outer things that follow you like a shadow. Be one who discriminates, free from the stain of *samsara* and from tendencies and sense objects. Retain consciousness without thought. Retain form, though formless. Have no likes and dislikes in what is experienced at the moment and no thought of what may happen in the future. Give up all thought of inner and outer and concentrate permanently on the blissful experience of Brahman. Through the power of knowledge maintain perfect equanimity in face of all opposites such as vice and virtue, likes and dislikes, or praise and blame whether by *sadhus* or by the wicked. The dedicated Sage is like a river emptied into the ocean, untouched by the attack of sense objects, absorbed in the Self, and it is only such a one who attains realization while still in the body. He alone is worshipful and reaps the reward of worthy actions. All his innate tendencies have been destroyed by his knowledge of Identity with Brahman and no renewal of *samsara* can be ascribed to him. Just as even the most lustful person never thinks of enjoying his own mother, so the Sage who experiences the perfection of Brahman never turns back to *samsara*. If he does, then he is not a Sage who has known Brahman but only an outward-turning soul.

Identity with Brahman is the fire of knowledge which burns up *sanchitha karma* (destiny stored up for future lives) and *agamya karma* (destiny being created in this life). *Sanchitha karma* is destroyed because it can no longer cause birth in higher or lower worlds once the Sage has awakened from the illusion of activity in which he harvested merit and demerit through countless ages. And *agamya karma* can no longer affect him because he knows himself to be established as the Supreme Brahman, indifferent as the ether to the effects of *karma*. There is ether in a pot containing alcohol, but is it affected by the smell of the alcohol? Not at all. Having spoken of the *sanchitha* and *agamya karma* of the Sage, it now remains to explain how his *prarabdha karma* (that part of past *karma* which is to be experienced in this life) is also a myth. Although ever absorbed in his true state, he is sometimes seen to experience the fruits of his past actions or to take part in outer activity; so people say that he is not free from *karma* since he must reap the good and bad effects of past action. Does not the rule that there is fruit of past action where there is destiny and no fruit where there is no destiny apply to the Sage also? They argue: if one shoots an arrow at an animal, thinking it to be a tiger, but it later turns out to be a cow, can the arrow be recalled? Once shot, it will certainly have to kill the cow. So too, they say, destiny that started on its course prior to the dawn of Enlightenment must produce its effects, so that the Sage is still subject to *prarabdha karma* only and must experience its effects. However, the scriptures declare such *prarabdha* to be unreal, because a man who has awakened from a dream experience does not go back into the same dream or desire to cling to the dream experiences or the body and environment of the dream as " I " and " mine ". He is perfectly free from the dream world and happy in his awakened state, whereas a man who retains any attachment to the dream cannot be said to have left the state of sleep. In the same way, one who has realized the Identity of Brahman and Self sees nothing else. He eats and excretes but as though in a dream. He is beyond all limitations and associations. He is the Absolute Brahman Itself. The three kinds of karma do not affect him in the least, so how can one say that only *prarabdha karma* affects him ? Is one who has awakened still dreaming ? Even if it were said that *prarabdha karma* affects the Sage's body, which has been constructed from the result of past *karma*, that would only affect him so long as he had the " I am the body " idea, but once that is gone, *prarabdha* cannot be attributed to him, since he is the Self, not born of *karma*, beginningless, pure, and described by the scriptures as " unborn, eternal, and deathless ". But to attribute *prarabdha* to the body, which is unreal and a figment of illusion, is itself an illusion. How can an illusion be born, live, and die as Reality ? It may be asked why, then, should the scriptures refer to a non-existent *prarabdha* ? It may also be asked how the body can continue to exist through knowledge after the death of ignorance and its effects. To those who are so misguided and under the influence of false ideas, the explanation is given that the scriptures admit that the Sage has illusory *prarabdha* only as a concession for the sake of argument and not to postulate that the Sage has a body and faculties. In him is visible the eternally established state of non-dual Brahman, beyond mental or verbal description and definition, without beginning or end, integral Being-Consciousness-Bliss, stabilised, homogeneous, never to be rejected or obtained, subtle, inwardly and outwardly complete, with no substratum, beyond the *gunas*, without colour, form, or change, as pure Being. Nothing at all is to be seen there of what obtains here. It is only by knowledge of this Oneness in the heart through Atma Yoga, by renouncing enjoyment and the very desire for enjoyment, that dedicated Sages who have peace and self-control obtain Supreme Deliverance.

'Therefore, my son, if you, too, by the eye of wisdom obtained through unwavering *samadhi*, discover beyond all doubt the Supreme Self of perfect bliss which is your original nature, you will no longer have any doubts about what you have heard. Cast out, therefore, the delusion created by the mind and become a Sage, a Realized Man who has attained the purpose of life. The Teacher, like the scriptures, gives instructions common to all, but each person must experience bondage and deliverance, hunger and satisfaction, sickness and health for himself; others can only infer it from him. Similarly, he who discriminates must cross the ocean of birth and death by his own efforts through the grace of the Supreme Lord. Thus obtaining release from bondage, which is due only to ignorance, remain as Being-Consciousness-Bliss. The scriptures, reason, the words of the Guru, and inner experience are the means you have to use for this.

'The essence of the Vedantic scriptures may be condensed into the following points.

'First: In me, the unmoving Brahman, all that seems different is utterly without reality. I alone am. This is called the standpoint of elimination (*Bādha drshti*).

'Second: The dream and all else that appears in me as the result of magic is an illusion. I alone am the Truth. This is called the standpoint of illusion (*Mithyā drshti*).

'Third: All that appears as form apart from the sea, that is the bubble and the wave, is the sea. All that is seen in a dream is seen in him who sees the dream. Similarly, in me as in the ocean or the man who dreams, all that seems separate from me is myself. This is called the standpoint of resolving (the effect into its cause) (*Pravilāpa drshti*).

'Reject the outer world by any of these three means and recognize him who sees it to be infinite, pure, homogeneous Brahman, Who is the Self. He who has thus realized Brahman is Liberated. Although all three of these viewpoints are aids to Realization, the third, in which one conceives everything as one's own Self, is the most powerful. Therefore, knowing the impartible Self to be one's own Self, by one's own experience, one must abide in one's own true nature, beyond any mental form. What more is there to say? The whole world and all individuals are really Brahman, and abidance as that impartible Brahman is itself Deliverance. This is the essence and conclusion of all the Vedas. The scriptures are the authority for this.'

The disciple realized the truth of the Self through these words of the Guru, through the authority of the scriptures and by his own understanding. He controlled his sense organs and, becoming one-pointed, remained for a short time absorbed in unswerving *samadhi* in that Supreme Self. Then he rose up and spoke thus to his Guru :

'Oh Master of the Supreme Experience, incarnation of the Supreme Peace, of Brahman, of the eternal essence of non-duality, endless ocean of grace, I bow down to you.'

Then, prostrating, he begins to tell of his own experience : 'Through the grace of the blessed sight of you the affliction due to the evil of birth is over and in an instant I have attained the blissful state of Identity. By realization of the identity of Brahman and Self my feeling of duality has been destroyed and I am free from outer activity. I cannot discriminate between what is and what is not.[1] Like the iceberg in the ocean, I have become absorbed bit by bit into the ocean of the Bliss of Brahman until I have become that ocean itself, whose nature and extent my intellect fails to plumb. How can one conceive of the vastness of this ocean of Brahmic Bliss full of the Divine Essence, how describe it in words ? The world that was perceived a moment ago has entirely vanished Where has it gone, by whom has it been removed, into what has it been dissolved ? What a wonder is this ! In this vast ocean of Brahmic Bliss full of divine experience, what is there to reject or accept, to see, hear or know, apart from its own Self ? I alone am the Self of Bliss. I am unattached ; I have neither a gross nor a subtle body. I am indestructible ; I am perfect stillness ; I am neither the doer nor the enjoyer ; I undergo no change. Action is not mine. I am not the seer or the hearer, the speaker, the doer, or the enjoyer. I am neither things experienced nor things not experienced but he who illumines both. I am the Void, within and without. I am beyond compare. I am the Spirit of old. I am without beginning. There is no creation in me of "I" or "you", or "this" or "that". I am both within and without all the elements as the conscious ether in them and also as the substratum on which they are. I am Brahma, I am Vishnu, I am Rudra, I am Isa, I am Sadasiva. I am beyond *Ishvara*[1]. I am the all-comprehensive witness, the indivisible, homogeneous Brahman, infinite, eternal, Being itself, unbroken whole perfection, existence, eternal, pure, enlightened, liberated, and of supreme Bliss. What were formerly experienced as separate things and as experiencer-experience-experienced I now find to be all in myself. Even though the waves of the world arise owing to Maya, as a wind rises and subsides, they arise and subside in me who am the unbounded ocean of Bliss.

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[1] This does not imply that the disciple is in a state of ignorance, unable to differentiate between Reality and illusion, but, on the contrary, that he is now established in the Non-duality beyond all opposites, even the opposite of being and non-being.

'Fools who are condemned for their errors wrongly ascribe body and other ideas to me who am harmless and immutable. It is like dividing illimitable, formless time into parts such as year, half-year and season. Just as the earth is not made wet by the waves of mirage, so destruction cannot touch me in any way, for I am unattached like the ether, separate from all that I illumine, like the sun, motionless as a mountain, boundless as the ocean. Just as the ether is unaffected by the clouds, so am I by the body; how then can it be my nature to wake up, dream, and sleep, as the body does? It is only the bodily limitations (upon Being) that come and go, act and reap the fruits of action, that are born, exist, and dissolve. How can I perform *karma*, choose activity or withdrawal, reap the fruits of merit or demerit, I who am like the fixed mountain mentioned in the *Puranas*, who am ever motionless, indivisible, complete and perfect, like the ether, who am one perfect whole without senses, consciousness, form, or change? If a man's shadow is cold or hot or has good or evil qualities, that does not affect the man at all; and in the same way I am beyond virtues and vices. The scriptures also declare this. Just as the nature of a house does not affect the light within it, so too, objective characteristics cannot affect me who am their witness, distinct from them, changeless, and untouched. Just as the sun witnesses all activity, so am I the witness of this whole objective world. Just as fire pervades iron, so do I permeate and enlighten the world; and at the same time I am the substratum on which the world exists like the imaginary serpent in a piece of rope. Being the self-effulgent "I", I am not the doer of anything nor he who causes it to be done; I am not the eater nor he who causes anything to be eaten; I am not the seer nor he who causes anything to be seen.

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[1] Even *Ishvara*, the Personal God, is a condensation or manifestation of Absolute Being and therefore to some extent a limitation. Even this is transcended in the State without impurities, without any ego-sense.

'It is the superimposed adjunct that moves. This movement of the reflected consciousness is ascribed by the ignorant to the Consciousness itself. So too, they say that I am the doer, the enjoyer, that I, alas, am them. Being inactive like the sun (in causing growth upon earth), being the Self of the forms and elements, I remain untouched by the reflected light of consciousness. It makes no difference to me if this body drops down on earth or in water. The qualities of the reflected light of consciousness no more affect me than the shape of a pot affects the ether inside it. States and functions of the intellect such as doing, enjoying, understanding, being dull-witted or drunk, bound or liberated, do not affect me since I am the pure non-dual Self. The duties (*dharmas*) arising from *Prakriti* in their thousands and hundreds of thousands no more affect me than the shadow cast by clouds affect the ether. I am that in which the whole universe from Prakriti down to gross matter appears as a mere shadow, that which is the substratum, which illumines all, which is the Self of all, is of all forms, is all pervasive and yet distinct from all, that which is all void, which is distinct without any of the attributes of Maya, that which is scarcely to be known by the gross intellect, which is ether itself, which has neither beginning nor end, which is subtle, motionless, formless, inactive, immutable, that pure Brahman in its natural state, unbroken, eternal, true, aware, endless, self-subsistent Bliss, non-dual Brahman.

'Master, I was perplexed in the nightmare forest of *Samsara,* of birth, old age, and death, caused by Maya, distressed by the tormenting episodes in it and terrified by the tiger of the ego. You awakened me from that nightmare by your grace and saved me, bringing me supreme Bliss. Great Master ! by the glory of your grace even I have obtained the empire of Real Being. I have become blessed and have accomplished the purpose of this life. Redeemed from the bondage of birth and death, I realize the reality of by being, which is the entire ocean of Bliss. Oh, it is all the glory of your grace, Oh Supreme Master ! Obeisance again and again to your blessed feet which, being in the form of the pure bliss of consciousness, are seen as the whole of creation. Obeisance for ever and ever !'

The Supreme Master is thus addressed with jubliant heart by the disciple who bows at his feet after realizing the truth of the One Being, the supreme Bliss. He replies : 'Just as he who has eyes has nothing to do but delight in forms, so he who knows Brahman has no other satisfying use for his intellect than experience of the Brahman Reality. Who would enjoy looking at a painted moon when the full moon shines in all its splendour for our delight? No one who has true knowledge can give up the essence to find delight in what is unreal. There is neither satisfaction nor banishment of sorrow in the experience of unreality; therefore a man must make every effort to see with the eye of realization and with the mind in a state of perfect peace to see his own Self as Brahman, as the truth of non-duality shining as the Self of the whole universe. He must meditate on this and concentrate ceaselessly on the Self. Then he will enjoy unbroken experience of essential Bliss and this alone will satisfy him. It is the intellect which causes restlessness, appearing as a city in the clouds in the attributeless whole of the conscious Self, and so the intellect must achieve absolute stillness and this will give eternal bliss and serenity in Brahman. When stillness and silence have been attained there will be contentment and peace. Perfect silence free from latent tendencies is the only means of experiencing eternal bliss for the *Mahatma*, for him who knows Brahman, who has realized the Self and experiences unbroken bliss.

'The Sage who has thus realized the Supreme Brahman will ever delight in the Self with unobstructed thought-current. He comes and goes, stands, sits, and lies down, performs whatever actions he will, with no need to observe place, time, posture, direction, rules of *yama*, or other stages of yoga, or positions for concentration. What need is there for rules such as *yama* for realizing one's Self? No external discipline is needed to know one's Self as "I am Brahman", just as "Devadatta"[1] needs no outer technique to know himself as such. This ever-existent Self shines of its own accord when the mind is pure, just as a pot is naturally seen when the eyesight is not defective. There is no need to consider the purity of place or time for abiding in the Self. Just as the world is illumined by the sun, so all the universes and the Vedas, *Shastras*, *Puranas*, and various elements are illumined by Brahman, who is also consciously self-effulgent. How can this Brahman be illumined by any low non-existent non-self? This supreme Self is self-effulgent with manifold powers (*sakti*), incapable of being known by anyone, and yet is experienced by everyone as the "I-I" in the heart. It is in realizing this Atman that the knower of Brahman is released from bondage, and when released he knows the contentment of experiencing the essence of eternal Bliss. This perfection of his beauty is beyond imagining. He feels no happiness or sorrow on account of outer conditions, whether agreeable or disagreeable, and has no likes or dislikes. He accepts like a child all conditions that surround him owing to the desires of others. Just as an innocent boy is absorbed in his game without worrying about hunger, thirst, or physical distress, so is the Sage absorbed in the play of his own Self without ego-consciousness and delights permanently in the Self. Ascending in the chariot of his body, he who enjoys the wide expanse of pure consciousness begs his food without any thought or feeling of humiliation, drinks the water from rivers, wraps himself in clothes that have not been washed or dried, or in the bark of trees, or goes naked. No code or rule of conduct binds him, for he is permanently free. Although sleeping on the ground, like a child or madman, he remains ever fixed in Vedanta. Mother earth is the flowery couch on which he lies. He sleeps without fear in the forest or cemetery, for his sport and pleasure are in Brahman. He who is the universal Self assumes at will countless forms and has countless experiences. In one place he behaves like an idiot, in another like a learned man, and in third like one deluded. Again, in one place he moves about as a man of peace, in another as a king, in another as a beggar eating out of his hand for want of a bowl. At one place he is seen to be adored, at another decried. Thus he lives everywhere and the Truth behind him cannot be perceived by others. Although he has no riches he is eternally in bliss. Although others may not help him he is mighty in strength. Although he may not eat he is eternally satisfied. He looks on all things with an equal eye. Though acting, it is not he who acts; though eating, it is not he who eats; though he has a body he is bodiless. Though individualized, he is the One Indivisible Whole. Knowing Brahman and liberated while yet in the body, he is not affected by likes and dislikes, joys and sorrows, auspicious and inauspicious things, natural to the common man who is attached to the body. Although the sun is never really caught by the dragon's head, (in an eclipse) it seems to be, and fools who do not know the truth say: "Look! the sun is caught." Similarly they say that he who knows Brahman has a body, but that is their delusion, because although he seems to have a body he is in no way affected by it. The body of the Liberated Man, although free from bondage, exists in one place or another, like the sloughed skin of a snake. The body of a Liberated Man, like a log of wood tossed up and down by the current of a river, may sometimes be immersed in pleasure owing to his *prarabdha* but even though this is so, due to the effects of latent tendencies in *prarabdha*, as with the body of a worldly person, he still remains the witness in his state of inner silence, the hub of the wheel, free from desire and aversion and utterly indifferent. He neither attaches the senses to the objects that give pleasure nor detaches them. The fruits of his actions do not affect him in the slightest, since he is completely drunk with the unbroken experience of the nectar of bliss. He who knows Brahman is the Absolute Self, the Supreme Lord, with no need for special forms of meditation. Of this there is no doubt.

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[1] Taken here simply as a specimen name.

'He who knows Brahman has achieved the purpose of life and is eternally liberated as Brahman, even though living in the body and using its faculties. Indeed, he realizes the state of Brahmtn even with the destruction of the body and its adjuncts. It is like an actor on the stage who is the same individual whether he wears a mask or not. It makes no difference to a tree whether the place where its dead leaf falls is auspicious or not, whether it is a river, a canal, a street, or a temple of Siva. Similarly, it does not affect the Sage where his body, already burnt in the fire of Knowledge, is cast away. The Being-Consciousness-Bliss of the Self does not perish with the body, breath, intellect, and sense organs any more than a tree does with its leaves, flowers, and fruit. The scriptures also declare : " Only that which is finite and mutable can perish," and also : " The Self, which is established consciousness, is truth and is imperishable." The Sage is Brahman in the perfect Bliss of Non-duality ; he is established in Truth, which is Brahman. How then, can it matter where and when he sheds his body, which is a vehicle of skin, flesh, and impurities? Getting rid of the body, the staff, and the water-pot (of the mendicant) is not really Liberation; Liberation as understood by the Sages really means loosing the knot of ignorance in the heart.

'Just as a stone, a tree, a straw, grain, a mat, pictures, a pot, and so on, when burned, are reduced to earth (from which they came), so the body and its sense organs, on being burnt in the fire of Knowledge, become Knowledge and are absorbed in Brahman, like darkness in the light of the sun. When a pot is broken the space that was in it becomes one with space; so too when the limitation caused by the body and its adjuncts is removed the Sage, realized during life, shines as Brahman, becoming absorbed in the Brahman he already was, like milk in milk, water in water, or oil in oil, and is radiant as the One Supreme Self. Thus, when the Sage who abides as Brahman, which is Pure Being, obtains his disembodied absolute state he is never again reborn. How can there be rebirth for a Sage who abides as Brahman, his body and its limitations burnt by the fire of Knowledge, the Identity of individual and Supreme? The existence of all that is either affirmed or denied in the one substratum of the indestructible, unattached, non-dual, absolute Self depends only on the mind, just as the appearance or disappearance of the imaginary snake in a piece of rope has no basis in reality, Bondage and Liberation are creations of Maya, superimpositions upon the Brahman imagined by the mind without any existence in reality. It is a fool who blames the sun for his own blindness. It is impossible to argue that bondage (*samsara*) is caused by the veiling power (*tamas*) of Maya and Liberation by its destructions, since there is no differentiation in the Self. Such an argument would lead to a denial of the truth of Non-duality and an affirmation of duality. This would be contrary to the authority of the scriptures. How can there be any display of Maya in non-dual Brahman, which is perfect stillness, One Whole like the ether, spotless, actionless, unstained, and formless? The scriptures even proclaim aloud: "There is in truth no creation and no destruction; no one is bound, no one is seeking Liberation, no one is on the way to Deliverance. There are none Liberated. This is the absolute truth." My dear disciple, this, the sum and substance of all the Upanishads, the secret of secrets, is my instruction to you. You also may impart it to one who aspires after Liberation, only be careful to examine him several times to make sure that he has real detachment and is free from all the sins and impurities of this dark age.'

On hearing these words from the Guru, the disciple bows down to him several times and then takes leave and goes home in a state of bliss. The Master also, immersed in the ocean of Bliss, wanders about the land in order to purify it.

Thus has been revealed the true nature of the Self in the form of a dialogue between the Guru and his disciple, as any who seek Liberation can easily understand. May these useful instructions be followed by those who have faith in the authority of the scriptures and who aspire after Liberation, by those advanced seekers who perform their prescribed duties without caring for the fruits of their actions and have thus cleansed themselves of mental impurities, who are not attached to the comforts of *samsara* and who have attained a state of equanimity.

Souls wandering about in the wild and terrible forest of *samsara* are oppressed by the torment of thirst caused by the terrific heat of the threefold evil,[1] and are then deluded by the mirage of water. The great Master Shankara Bhagavath Padacharya wishes to inform them of the existence close at hand of an ocean of sweet water, the bliss of Non-duality, so that they may obtain relief, and has blessed them with his Vivekachudamani, 'The Crest Jewel of Wisdom' which will confer on them the eternal bliss of Liberation. This is beyond doubt.

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[1] (1) *Adhyatmika,* (2) *Adhibhoutika,* (3) *Adhidaivika.*

OM

Peace, Peace, Peace.

Drik Drisya Viveka

Translated and with introductory verse by
BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

O Thou Divine Shankara,
Thou art the Subject,
That has Knowledge
Of subject and object.
Let the subject in me be destroyed
As subject and object.
For thus in my mind arises
The Light as the Single Siva.

* * * *

INTRODUCTION

Written by Bhagavan Sri Ramana to His translation in Tamil of Sri Shankaracharya's *Drik Drisya Viveka* :

* * * *

" Brahman is only one and non-dual " declare the *Srutis*. Since Brahman is the Sole Reality, according to Advaita, how is it that Brahman is not apparent to us, whereas the *prapancha* (world i.e., non-Brahman) is so vivid? Thus questions the advanced *sadhaka*.

In one's own Self, which is no other than Brahman, there is a mysterious power known as *Avidya* (Ignorance) which is beginningless and not separate from the Self. Its characteristics are veiling and presentation of diversity. Just as the pictures in a cinema, though not visible either in sunlight or in darkness become visible in a spot of light in the midst of darkness, so in the darkness of Ignorance there appears the reflected light of the Self, illusory and scattered, taking the form of thought. This is the primal thought known as the ego, *jiva* or *karta* (doer), having the mind as the medium of its perceptions. The mind has a store of latent tendencies which it projects as the object of a shadow-show in the waking and dream states. This show, however, is mistaken for real by the *jiva*. The veiling aspect of the mind first hides the real nature of the Self and then presents the objective world to view. Just as the waters of the ocean do not seem different from the waves, so also for the duration of objective phenomena, the Self, though Itself the Sole Being, is made to appear not different from them. Turn away from the delusion caused by latent tendencies and the false notions of interior and exterior. By such constant practice of *sahaja samadhi*, the veiling power vanishes and the non-dual Self is left over to shine forth as Brahman Itself. This is the whole secret of the Advaita doctrine as taught by the master to the advanced *sadhaka*. Here the same teaching is contained which Sri Shankaracharya has expounded concisely without any elaboration in following text.

* * *

All our perception pertains to the non-Self. The immutable Seer is indeed the Self. All the countless scriptures proclaim only discrimination between Self and non-Self.

The world we see, being seen by the eye, is *drisya* (object); the eye which sees is *drik* (subject). But the eye, being perceived by the mind is *drisya* (object) and the mind which sees it is *drik* (subject). The mind, with its thoughts perceived by the Self, is *drisya* (object) and the Self is *drik* (subject). The Self cannot be *drisya* (object), not being perceived by anything else. The forms perceived are various, blue and yellow, gross and subtle, tall and short, and so on; but the eye that sees them remains one and the same. Similarly, the varying qualities of the eye, such as blindness, dullness and keenness and of the ears and other organs, are perceived by the mind singly. So, too, the various characteristics of the mind, such as desire, determination, doubt, faith, want of faith, courage, want of courage, fear, shyness, discrimination, good and bad, are all perceived by the Self singly. This Self neither rises nor sets, neither increases nor decays. It shines of its own luminosity. It illumines everything else without the need for aid from other sources.

Buddhi, as the sum total of the inner organs, in contact with the reflected consciousness has two aspects. One is called egoity and the other mind. This contact of the *buddhi* with the reflected consciousness is like the identity of a red-hot iron ball with fire. Hence the gross body passes for a conscious entity. The contact establishing identity between the ego and the reflected Consciousness, is of three kinds.

1. The identification of the ego with the reflected Consciousness is natural or innate.
2. The identification of the ego with the body is due to past *karma*.
3. The identification of the ego with the Witness is due to ignorance.

The natural or innate contact continues as long as the *buddhi*, but on Realization of the Self it proves to be false.

The third-mentioned contact is broken when it is discovered by experience that there is no sort of contact of anything at all with the Self, which is Being. The second-mentioned contact, that born of past *karma*, ceases to exist on the destruction of innate tendencies (*vasanas*). In the deep sleep state, when the body is inert, the ego is fully merged (in the causal ignorance). Its being half manifest is the dream state, and its being fully manifest is the waking state. It is the mode or modification of thought (with its latent tendencies) that creates the inner world of dreams in the dream state and the outer world in the waking state. The subtle body, which is the material cause of mind and ego, experiences the three states and also birth and death.

Maya of the causal body has its powers of projecting (*rajas*) and veiling (*tamas*). It is the projecting power that creates everything from the subtle body to the gross universe of names and forms. These are produced in the *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Being-Consciousness-Bliss) like foam in the ocean. The veiling power operates in such a way that internally the distinction between subject and object cannot be perceived, and externally that between Brahman and the phenomenal world. This indeed is the cause of *Samsara*. The individual with his reflected light of Consciousness is the subtle body existing in close proximity with the Self that is the *Vyavaharika* (the empirical Self). This individual character of the empirical Self appears in the Witness or *Sakshin* also through false superimposition. But on the extinction of the veiling power (*tamas*), the distinction between witness and the empirical Self becomes clear ; and the superimposition also drops away. Similarly, Brahman shines as the phenomenal world of names and forms only through the effect of the veiling power which conceals the distinction between them. When the veiling ends, the distinction between the two is perceived, for none of the activities of the phenomenal world exist in Brahman.

Of the five characteristics, Being, Consciousness, Bliss, name and form, the first three pertain to Brahman and name and form to the world. The three aspects of Being, Consciousness and Bliss exist equally in the five elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth and in devas (gods), animals, men, etc., whereas the names and forms are different. Therefore, be indifferent to names and forms, concentrate on Being-Consciousness-Bliss and constantly practise *samadhi* (identity with Brahman) within the heart or outside.

This practice of *samadhi* (identity with Brahman) is of two kinds; *savikalpa* (in which the distinction between Knower, Knowledge and Known is not lost) and *nirvikalpa* (in which the above distinction is lost). *Savikalpa samadhi* again is of two kinds, that which is associated with words (sound), and meditation on one's own consciousness as the witness of thought forms such as desire, which is *savikalpa samadhi* (internal), associated with (cognizable) objects. Realizing one's Self as 'I am Being-Consciousness-Bliss without duality, unattached, self-effulgent,' is *savikalpa samadhi* (internal) associated with words (sound). Giving up both objects and sound forms of the aforesaid two modes of *samadhi* and being completely absorbed in the Bliss experienced by the realization of the Self is *nirvikalpa samadhi* (internal). In this state is obtained steady abidance, like the unflickering flame of a light kept in a place free from wind. So also, in the heart, becoming indifferent to external objects of name and form and perceiving only Being of (or as) *Sat* is *savikalpa samadhi* (external) associated with objects; and being aware continually of that *Sat* (true existence) as the unbroken single essence of Brahman is *savikalpa samadhi* (external) associated with words (sound). After these two experiences, Being which is uninterrupted like the waveless ocean is *nirvikalpa samadhi* (external). One who meditates should spend his time perpetually in these six kinds of *samadhi*. By these, the attachment to the body is destroyed and the mind that perpetually abides in the Supreme Self (*Paramatman*) wherever it may wander is everywhere spontaneously in *samadhi*. By this constant practice of *samadhi*, the Supreme Self, who is both highest and lowliest, who encompasses *Paramatma* as well as *Jivatma* is directly experienced, and then the knot of the heart is loosed; all doubts are destroyed and all *Karmas* (activities) cease too.

Of the three modes of individual being: the limited self (as in deep sleep), the empirical self (as in the waking state) and the dreaming self, only the individual limited by the deep sleep state is the true Self (*Paramarthika*). Even he is but an idea. The Absolute alone is the true Self. In reality and by nature he is Brahman itself, only superimposition creates the limitations of individuality in the Absolute. It is to the *Paramarthika Jiva* that the identity of *Tat Twam Asi* (That thou art) and other great texts of the Upanishads applies, and not to any other. The Great Maya (the Superimposition without beginning or end) with her veiling and projecting power (*tamas* and *rajas*) veils the single impartible Brahman and, in that Brahman, creates the world and individuals. The individual (*jiva*), a concept of the empirical self in the *buddhi*, is indeed the actor and enjoyer and the entire phenomenal world is its object of enjoyment. From time without beginning, till the attainment of Liberation, individual and world have an empirical existence. They are both empirical. The empirical individual appears to have the power of sleep in the shape of the veiling and projecting powers. It is associated with Consciousness. The power covers first the individual empirical self and the cognized Universe, and then these are imagined in dream. These dream perceptions and the individual who perceives them are illusory, because they exist only during the period of dream experience. We affirm their illusory nature, because on waking up from dream no one sees the dream, no one sees the dream objects. The dreaming self experiences the dream world as real, while the empirical self experiences the empirical world as real but, when the *Paramarthika Jiva* is realized, knows it to be unreal. The *Paramarthika Jiva*, as distinguished from those of the waking and dream experiences, is identical with Brahman. He has no 'other'. If He does see any 'other', He knows it to be illusory.

The sweetness, liquidity, and coldness of water are characteristics present equally in waves and foam. So, too, the Being-Consciousness-Bliss character of the Self (the aforementioned *Paramarthika*) is present in the empirical self and through him in the dream self also, because of their being only illusory creations in the Self. The foam with its qualities, such as coldness, subsides in the waves, the waves with their characteristics, such as liquidity, subside in the water, and the ocean alone exists as at first. Similarly, the dream-self and its objects are absorbed in the empirical self; then the empirical world with its characteristics is absorbed in the *Paramarthika* and, as at first, Being-Consciousness-Bliss which is Brahman shines alone.

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Vichāra Mani Mālā

(JEWEL GARLAND OF ENQUIRY)

This is a compilation of the salient points extracted by Bhagavan Śri Ramana Maharṣi from a large volume in Tamil known as *Vichāra Sāgara* (Ocean of Enquiry), which itself was a translation from the original in Hindi by Mahatma Niṣchaldas. On being appealed to by a devotee, Arunachala Mudaliar, who complained that the volume in Tamil was too difficult to read and understand, Śri Bhagavān graciously made the following extracts therefrom.

INVOCATION

I am that Brahman which is bliss, which is eternal, effulgent, all-pervasive, the substratum of names and forms, which is not cognized by the impure intellect, but is cognized by the pure intellect, stainless and boundless. That is to say, when one discards the *Jīva* (individual being) of the form of *ahamkāra* (ego-sense), which is the apparent meaning of the word 'I', what remains merely as the effulgent and conscious Ātman (Self), which is the implied meaning of the word 'I', is Brahman. This can also be understood from the following words of Arunagiriar's experience: "After swallowing me who had the form of 'I' (ego), that Supreme Being remained as mere Self."

THE TEXT

The noble aspirant for Liberation whose mind has become pure and one-pointed by the cessation of evil thoughts, as a result of the motiveless acts and meditations performed by him in his former lives, and who is subject only to the defect of the concealing power (*āvarana sakti*) in the form of ignorance of the Self, and who possesses the four qualifications of discrimination, dispassion, the six virtues like self-control and yearning for Liberation, being unable to endure the miseries of *samsāra,* approaches the Sadguru who is compassionate, who has realized the meaning of Vedānta and who is established in Brahman, and, after prostrating before him with fear and reverence, questions him thus :—

Disciple. Swami, what are the means of putting an end to the miseries of *samsāra* like birth and death and of attaining supreme bliss ?

Guru. O Disciple ! What a delusion ! You are always of the nature of bliss. There is not the least trace of the miseries of *samsāra* in you. Therefore do not take upon yourself the miseries of birth, etc. You are the conscious Brahman which is free from birth and death.

Disciple. Is not Liberation the cessation of misery and the attainment of supreme bliss ? If I am (already) of the nature of bliss how is it possible for me to attain the bliss which is always attained and similarly to get rid of the misery which never existed ?

Guru. This is possible just as one can seek and find a bracelet which was on one's arm all the time but which one had forgotten about, and on finding it look upon it as a new acquisition. It is possible as in the case of the serpent which, at no time present in the rope, was mistaken for one, but which seemed to be there and seems to disappear when one discovers that it is only a piece of rope.

Disciple. Will the non-existence of misery and the existence of bliss co-exist in one and the same state (*lit.* substance) of Liberation?

Guru. They will. Just as the non-existence of the imagined serpent is the existence of the rope, the non-existence of the imagined misery is the existence of bliss.

Disciple. As bliss arises only from contact with objects how can I be said to be (of the nature of) bliss?

Guru. The bliss of the Self will not be felt in the intellect which is distracted by desires for objects by one who does not know the Self. When the object of desire is obtained the intellect becomes steady for a moment and turns inward. Then the bliss of the Self is reflected in it and this gives rise to a delusion that there was bliss in the object. But when other objects are desired this bliss vanishes. It is similar to the bliss which one experiences on the arrival of one's son from a foreign country. It does not last as long as the object which seemed to be the cause of it. Further, bliss is experienced in the state of *samādhi* and deep sleep even without objects. Therefore there is no bliss in objects. The Self alone is bliss. It is because the bliss of the Self alone is experienced by all that all are proclaimed by the Vedas to be of the form of bliss.

Disciple. But does the Sage (*jñāni*) who knows the Self desire objects and experience bliss, or does he not?

Guru. Although he may desire objects and experience bliss like the ignorant person, he does not imagine that bliss to be any different from the bliss of the Self.

Disciple. When the misery of birth, death, etc., is actually experienced how can it be said that it never exists in me?

Guru. Know that the world of birth, death, etc., is an illusory appearance like the serpent in the rope and blueness in the sky, or like dreams, due to your ignorance of your Self which is Brahman.

Disciple. What is the support (*ādhāra*) for this extensive world?

Guru. Just as the rope is the support and basis for the delusive serpent which appears when the rope is not recognized as such, so you are the support and basis for the world which appears when you do not know your Self.

Disciple. Kindly explain distinctly the ideas of support (*ādhāra*) and basis (*adhishtāna*).

Guru. Even in the unreal serpent there is a concept 'this' which is mixed up with the general concept 'this' underlying the rope. Similarly in the unreal world there is a concept 'it exists' which is mixed up with the general concept of existence underlying the Self. This existence is the support of the world. Again, just as there is the particular concept 'rope' (besides the general concept of 'this') there is also the particular concept of the Self, namely that it is unattached, immutable, ever-liberated, all-pervasive, etc. This is not cognized at the time of the delusion, but, when cognized, removes the delusion. This particular concept of Self is the basis of the world.

Disciple. Corresponding to the seer who is separate from the rope which is the support and basis of the serpent, who is the seer apart from me who am the support and basis of the world?

Guru. If the basis is insentient a separate seer is necessary. If the basis is sentient it will itself be the seer. Just as the witnessing consciousness which is the basis of the dream is itself the seer of the dream, you are yourself the seer of the world.

Disciple. If the world of the waking state comes into existence and falsely appears like dreams through nescience, why should we speak of any distinction between the waking state and the dream state and say that the waking state has relative (empirical : *vyavahārika*) reality while the dream state has only personal (*pratibhāsika*) reality ?

Guru. Since a dream appears without the help of the appropriate time, space and materials on account of nescience accompanied by the defect (*dośam*) of sleep, it is spoken of as a personal state. Since the waking state appears in the Supreme Self which is free from time, space and materials, owing to nescience alone, it is spoken of as the relative state. They are thus described with reference to the three states of reality (personal, relative and absolute). When we think clearly there is no difference between them. Nor is there any difference between the waking and the dream state. Undifferentiated consciousness is the only true reality. Whatever is different from it is personal and has nescience as its material cause and consciousness as its basis.

Disciple. If that is so why is there a cessation of the dream state even in the absence of knowledge of Brahman while the state of waking does not cease without knowledge of Brahman ?

Guru. Although there cannot be complete cessation of the dream state until there is knowledge of Brahman in the waking state, the defect of sleep, which is the immediate cause of the dream, may disappear by the emergence of the waking state which is inimical to it.

Disciple. The objects of the waking state prior to the dream exist in the waking state succeeding the dream also. But the objects of one dream are not seen in the next dream. How then can the two states be regarded as similar?

Guru. All objects are the transformation by nescience of the underlying consciousness. When a concept arises they also arise and when a concept ceases they also cease. Therefore it cannot be said that the objects of the previous waking state exist in the subsequent waking state also. As in a dream they (the objects of the subsequent waking state) come into existence for the time being. Therefore both are similar.

Disciple. Since a man who wakes up from a dream believes the objects he sees to be the same as before his dream, it cannot be said that they come into existence only when there is knowledge of them. Objects exist permanently prior to and after the knowledge of them.

Guru. Just as the things which come into existence for the time being in a dream seem to have existed unchanged for a long time, so also do the objects which come into existence in the waking state on account of strong nescience. The ideas of cause and effect in respect of these objects are also similar.

Disciple. If the bondage of samsara came into existence on account of ignorance of the Self, when did that ignorance arise?

Guru. The ignorance, arising from the Self, which is Brahman, is mere imagination (*kalpita*) and has no beginning.

Disciple. Since darkness cannot exist in the sun, how can nescience exist in Brahman which is pure consciousness? Even if it exists, it cannot exist in what is clearly known or in what is not at all known. Superimposition of a false reality upon a true is possible only when the general aspect of something is known and not its particular aspect. Brahman has no parts like general and particular; it is attributeless; so how can there be the superimposition of bondage?

Guru. Although Brahman is consciousness the general (indistinct) aspect of that all-pervasive consciousness which is of the nature of effulgence is not inimical to nescience, but helpful to it. In deep sleep nescience co-exists with the Consciousness of the Self. The general (possibility of) fire within the wood is not inimical to darkness, but helpful to it. But as the actualised (manifest) fire produced by rubbing the wood is inimical to darkness, so also the distinct consciousness produced in the mind as Brahman is inimical to nescience. Although Brahman is without attributes (and cannot therefore be cognised) its general existence is known even in the state of nescience in the form of 'I am', while its particular aspects like consciousness, bliss, etc., are not then known, but are known only in the state of knowledge. As appearances are the result of nescience there can be the bondage of superimposition in the attributeless Brahman which is known as existence and unknown as consciousness and bliss.

Disciple. Although the world is unreal it is the cause of miseries like birth and death. An unreal nightmare will not occur if *japa* is done (before going to sleep). Analogous to this what can be done to prevent the appearance of the world?

Guru. That which appears owing to ignorance of something will cease to appear only through knowledge of that something. The serpent and the silver which appear on account of the ignorance of the rope and the nacre will disappear only through knowledge of them. Similarly the world which appears on account of ignorance of your Self will disappear only through knowledge of the Self. Brahman is infinite, homogeneous, unattached to anything, without birth, etc., invisible and without name and form. The nescience imagined in it and its effects, namely the individual, the Lord and the world, are unreal in all the three periods of time. Whatever is seen is the play of the intellect which is the effect of that nescience. Brahman, while remaining unmoved, illumines the intellect. This intellect projects its false imagination in the states of waking and dreaming and merges in the nescience in the state of deep sleep. " Just as the water of the mirage does not make the desert wet this unreal thing (world) will not do any harm to me who am its basis." Such a conviction is real knowledge. This is the means of Liberation. I have already said this. Darkness will not disappear through anything except light ; it will not disappear through ritualistic acts, meditation (*upāsanā*) [1] etc. The darkness of nescience departs along with its effects from him in whose heart the light of knowledge arises. He remains always as the unattached and homogeneous Self of the form of Brahman. Nothing came into existence in the past. Nor is there anything existing now. Nor will there be anything in the future. Since the objects that are known do not (really) exist, the terms 'witness' and 'seer' are not applicable.

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[1] *Upāsana* is the uninterrupted meditation upon a deity or a form or a word like Om until one becomes that deity or form or word. It is a technique which is not generally followed nowadays. Its modern equivalent is *bhakti* (devotion).

Since there is no bondage there is no liberation. Since there is no nescience there is no knowledge. He who has known this and cast away the sense of duty is a Sage (*jñāni*). Whether his senses come into contact with their objects or not he is unattached and free from desires. Therefore even though he may appear to act he does nothing.

Disciple. How can the individual who is of the form of 'I' 'I' and is numerous and finite and subject to attachment and other forms of misery be identical with Brahman which is one and all-pervasive and free from attachment and other forms of misery? If individual and Brahman are the same who is it that acts? And who bestows the fruits of action?

Guru. Although Brahman cannot be identical with the individuality (*jīva*) which is limited to the inner organ (*antahkarana*) and which is the apparent meaning of 'I', it can be with the witness (*sākṣi*), which is the implied meaning of the word 'I'. It is the reflected part (*ābhāsa bhāga*) of the *jiva* which performs action. The reflected part in *Īśvara* (God), which is the apparent meaning of the word 'Tat' (Brahman), bestows the fruits of action. There is no difference in the consciousness which is the implied meaning of these words (I and Tat). Nor do these two aspects (*jīva* and *Īśvara*) really exist.

Disciple. Who is the *jīva*? Who is the *sākṣi* (witness)? is not a witness other than the *jīva* a sheer impossibility like the son of a barren woman?

Guru. Just as the reflection of the sky in a pot becomes the sky in the water, consciousness established in the intellect (*buddhi*) along with the reflected consciousness (*ābhāsa*) in the intellect, accompanied by desires and actions, becomes the *jīva* who is the doer, enjoyer and *samsārin*. The consciousness which is the basis of the intellect and which is the attribute of the *jīva* or the finite (*vyaśti*) nescience, is the immutable witness (*kutastha*). He has no beginning and is unchanging. Features (*dharmas*) like good and evil, joy and sorrow, going to another world and coming back to this, belong to the reflected consciousness alone. Even in the reflected consciousness they exist only in the inner organ which is its attribute. They do not exist in the consciousness which is the substance part (of the *jīva*). The substance part of the *jīva* is the witness. In one and the same consciousness the inner organ is the adjunct (*upādhi*) for the ideas of witness and attribute for the idea of *jīva*. That is to say, the single consciousness becomes the *jīva* along with the inner organ and the witness when bereft of it. That is, one and the same inner organ is the adjunct of consciousness in the eyes of one who lacks discrimination. Therefore the single consciousness is the witness for a man of discrimination and *jīva* for one who lacks discrimination.

Disciple. How is it possible for even the witness who is manifold and limited on account of the multiplicity of *jīvas* to be identical with Brahman who is one?

Guru. Just as the space in a pot which is manifold and limited is not different from, and in fact is, the same as total space (*mahākāśa*), the witness who is manifold and limited is not different from Brahman but is Brahman. It is therefore possible for it to be identical with Brahman. Therefore know 'I am Brahman'.

Disciple. For whom is this knowledge? For the *jīva* or for the witness?

Guru. Knowledge and ignorance are for the *jīva* alone and not for the witness.

Disciple. Will not the knowledge 'I am Brahman' which arises in the *jīva* which is different from Brahman be false?

Guru. As the immutable Self (*kutastha*) implied in the term 'I' is always one with Brahman, like the pot-space and infinite space, it is completely identical with it. As for the *jīva* implied in the term 'I' it can have identity with Brahman 'by removal of obstruction' (*bādha samānādhikaranyam*) through negating the idea of *jīva*, just as the man one imagines one sees in a post (*in a dim light*) becomes one with the post on the negation of the idea of its being a man.

Disciple. Do the reflected consciousness (*ābhāsa*) and the immutable (*kutastha*) which are implied in the term 'I' exist at the same time? Or do they appear at different times?

Guru. They appear at the same time. The reflected consciousness is the object of the witness, but the witness is self-cognized. When there is actual knowledge of pots and other external objects what happens is this: The concept part in the concept of the inner organ accompanied by the reflected consciousness goes out as far as the pots and other objects and assumes their forms and removes the obstruction (*āvaranam*) which naturally covers them, on account of ignorance. Just as a non-luminous object covered by a pot will not be seen (in the dark) even if the pot is broken by a stick, but can be seen with the help of a lamp, even so the reflected part illumines the objects.

When there is direct realization of Brahman, which is the Self, what happens is this: The inner organ, with the help of the sound produced by the important scriptural saying (*mahāvākya*)[1] 'That thou art' (*tat tvam asi*) when connected with the ear, takes the form of Brahman (*Brahmākāra*) and loses contact with the senses. This is like the knowledge of the tenth man (*daśama*) which arises through the sound produced by the sentence 'you are the tenth man' or like the ideas of joy and sorrow which arise without any (corresponding) external objects. This concept of the form of Brahman removes the obstruction hiding the Self and then the slight ignorance which still persists in the inner organ disappears like the dirt (in a cloth) which is removed by soap. Thereafter Brahman becomes manifest by his own effulgence like the light of the glorious sun which shines when slight obstructions like one's fingers held over one's eyes are removed. Just as a lamp kept in a pot shines without the aid of another light when the pot is broken. Brahman too does not require the help of the reflected consciousness.

Disciple. What are the chief (*antaranga*) and secondary (*bahiranga*) means of attaining his knowledge?

Guru. Ritualistic sacrifices and similar acts and meditation (*upāsana*) performed without motive are the secondary means. The four (qualifications)[2] like discrimination, the three (steps)[3] and (the one) enquiry into the meaning of 'That' and 'Thou' these eight make up the chief means.

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[1] Vedantic sayings are of two kinds, namely chief and secondary. The texts which propound the nature of the *jiva* and Brahman are secondary texts. They produce indirect (intellectual) knowledge. The chief texts propound the identity of the *jiva* and Brahman. They produce direct knowledge.

[2] The four qualifications are (1) discrimination between what is eternal and what is fleeting (*nityānitya vastu viveka*), (2) absence of desire for the enjoyment of the fruits of (one's actions) in this world and the next (*ihāmutrartha phala bhoga virāga*), (3) the possession of the six virtues * like control of mind (*sama*) and (4) yearning for Liberation.

* The six virtues are (1) control of the mind (*śama*), (2) control of the sense-organs (*dama*), (3) cessation of activity (*uparati*),

Disciple. If knowledge arises through the 'saying' alone where is the need for 'hearing', etc.?

Guru. Knowledge is of two kinds, namely steady (free from defects) and unsteady (defective). Although an inferior aspirant (*mandādhikāri*) who has doubts and false notions may have direct knowledge through the teaching of the 'saying' it will not produce the proper effect as it is defective. By constant practice of 'hearing', etc., the defect will be removed. This is the aim of 'hearing' etc. In the case of a superior aspirant (*uttama adhikari*) whose inner organ is extremely pure and free from the doubts and false notions, so that steady direct knowledge will arise by merely hearing the saying, it is not necessary to have hearing, etc., (again) for removing the defects. He alone is 'liberated while alive' (*jivan mukta*), whose wisdom is firm (*sthita prajña*).

Disciple. What are the distinguishing marks of the Sage and the ignorant person?

Guru. The ignorant person is distinguished by his attachment (*rāga*), the Sage by dispassion. Even if the ignorant person occasionally develops dispassion, it is likely to change since he has not got rid of the sense of reality in the objects of the senses. His dispassion is superficial. On the other hand the dispassion of the Sage which has developed out of his sense of the unreality of objects of the

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(4) fortitude (*titiksha*), (5) faith in the scriptures and the guru (*śraddha*) and (6) concentration of mind (*samādhāna*).

[3] The three steps are (1) hearing (*śravaṇa*), (2) reflection (*manana*) and (3) uninterrupted contemplation (*nididhyāsana*).

senses does not change at any time and is therefore intense.

Disciple. Why do some persons say that ritualistic acts (*karma*) accompanied by meditation (*upāsana*) and knowledge (*jñāna*) are the cause of steadiness?

Guru. The idea that the Self, which is separate from the body, is the doer and enjoyer and the idea that the doer, the act and its result are different from one another are the cause of ritualistic acts; the result is impermanent *samsāra.* The Self is of the nature of the unattached Brahman; the doer, the act and the result are not distinct from the Self; this is knowledge, and its fruit is eternal Liberation. So how can these two co-exist?

Disciple. So long as the inner organ exists its natural quality of unsteadiness will not leave even the Sage. Therefore if it is not an obstacle to Liberation after death (*videha mukti*) how can there be the experience of bliss of Liberation while alive? Is it not necessary for even the Sage to meditate (do *upasana*) in order to remove the unsteadiness of the mind?

Guru. Since samādhi and distraction are the same to a Sage of steadfast wisdom he does not enter into any action for the sake of steadiness of mind. For him there is no nescience as a cause of his activity, nor any delusion of difference as a result of nescience, nor attachment and hatred resulting from the delusion of difference. Only *prārabdha* (that part of one's *karma* which has to be worked out in this life) remains; this is the cause of his activity. And that being different from person to person there is no fixity (*lit.* order) in regard to the activity arising out of *prārabdha.* Hence the Sage's activity and inactivity are governed by *prārabdha.* Therefore there can be desire for sense-enjoyment and efforts to attain it, as in the case of Janaka and others, on account of the *prārabdha* responsible for enjoyment. Similarly there can be the desire for Liberation while alive and disgust with sense-enjoyment as in the case of Śuka, Vamadeva and others, on account of the *prārabdha* responsible for inactivity. The bliss of Brahman will not become manifest owing to the mere immobility of the inner organ. It will become manifest only through the concept of the form of Brahman (*Brahmākāra vritti*). Since this will arise only through reflection (*chintana*) on the meaning of the Vedānta (texts), and since unsteadiness will disappear even through this, one who desires to have the bliss of Liberation while alive has to reflect on the meaning of Vedānta texts only and need not meditate (do *upāsana*).

Disciple. Can the Sage have too much activity?

Guru. When activity is excessive happiness will decrease; when activity is less the happiness will be more. But knowledge remains the same. Although activity is inimical to that (kind of) happiness which is distinct from Liberation while alive it is not inimical to Liberation while alive, since there is not delusion of bondage by activity and inactivity so far as the Self is concerned.

Disciple. Since the Sage cannot have attachment on account of his seeing all objects as non-Self, unreal and evil, what can motivate his activity?

Guru. Although he knows the body to be unreal the Sage may be active on account of his *prārabdha*; for instance, he may go begging, etc., to maintain the body on account of his *prārabdha*. It is like people watching a conjuring act even when they know how it is done, or like an invalid doing things that are bad for him even though he knows that they are.

Disciple. What is the meaning of saying that the Sage has no desires?

Guru. It is not that his inner organ will not take the form of desires. As the inner organ is not the product of pure *sattva* (tendency to purity) alone but of the less prominent *rajas* (the principle of activity) and *tamas* (darkness, ignorance) in combination with the prominent *sattva* all the qualities will more or less exist in it. Therefore so long as the inner organ remains there will not be entire absence of desires which are modifications of *rajas*. But the Sage does not mistake the desires for characteristics of the Self. That is the difference. He is unattached. Though he acts he is a non-doer. That is why the scripture (*śruti*) says that the good and bad acts done by the body and the merit and demerit (acquired thereby) after attaining knowledge do not affect him.

Disciple. Is it not necessary for the Sage to enter into blissful and non-dual *nirvikalpa samādhi* in which concepts are all absorbed in nescience, as in deep sleep, and there is no experience of nescience-covered bliss and the concept of the inner organs in the form of Brahman (*Brahmākāra vritti*) is absorbed in the effulgence of Brahman?

On hearing this the Guru laughed thinking, "why does he talk like a fool?"

Disciple. Won't one who, while alive, gives up the bliss of Liberation to enjoy sense pleasures, give up Liberation after death for the desire to attain heavenly worlds?

Guru. The rejection of the bliss of Liberation while alive and the desire for worldly enjoyments may happen in the case of a Sage on account of his *prārabdha*, but they will not happen after his nescience is burnt up by his knowledge. Therefore his life force (*prāṇa*) will not go out and he cannot become embodied again either in this world or any other on account of *prārabdha*. Hence the rejection of Lberation after death and desire for, or attainment of, other worlds is not possible for the Sage.

Disciple. What is Liberation while alive? And what is Liberation after death?

Guru. The absence of the delusion of bondage even while one is embodied is Liberation while alive. The absorption of the gross and subtle nescience in consciousness after the experience of *prārabdha* is Liberation after death.

This is the gist of the important scriptural texts.

On hearing this the disciple experienced the direct knowledge of his Self and, after first experience Liberation while alive, attained Liberation after death.

OM TAT SAT

Sri Ramaṇārpaṇamasthu

Glossary

A

Advaita; Non-duality, often incorrectly termed 'monism'.

Agami Karma; Actions good and bad, expected to bear fruit in future births.

Aham; I; embodied self; soul.

Aham Sphurana; The throb of Self-Bliss in the heart.

Aham Svarupa; One's true nature.

Ahamkara (or *ahankara*); The ego-self.

Ajnana; Ignorance; knowledge of diversity.

Ananda; Bliss.

Anartha; Evil, worthless.

Antahkarana; Instruments of inner perception.

Antarmukha drishti; Inward vision.

Apana; One of the ten vital airs.

Aprana; Beyond manifest life; devoid of life.

Asana; Yogic posture.

Ashtanga-Yoga—Yoga consisting of eight stages of discipline.

Atma (or *Atman*); Self; principle of life and sensation.

Atma Dhyana
Atmanusandhana } Contemplation on the Self.

Atma Vichara; Inquiry into the Self.

Avidya; Nescience, ignorance.

B

Bhagavan; A commonly used name for God. A title used for one like Sri Ramana who is recognized as having realized his identity with the Self.

Bahirmukha drishti; Outward turned consciousness.

Bhakta; A devotee.

Bhakti; Devotion and love.

Bharata; A form of address used by Sri Krishna towards Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, meaning a shining soul.

Bhavana; Continued meditation; steady concentration of mind.

Brahma; Lord of Creation; God as the Creator.

Brahman; The Absolute.

Buddhi; Intellect; one of the four aspects of the internal organ.

C

Chakra; A wheel, a Yogic centre of concentration.

Chandrayana; Expiatory fast for a full month, commencing from the full moon, food being diminished every day by one handful during the dark fortnight, and increased in like manner during the bright fortnight.

Chit; Absolute Intelligence or Consciousness.

Chitta; The mental mode turned towards objects. That aspect of the mind in which impressions are stored.

D

Dahara Vidya; Contemplation of the deity in the cavity of the heart.

Deva; A god or celestial being.

Devata; A deity.

Devi; The Divine Mother or a Goddess.

Dharma; Virtuous deeds; harmonious life; a man's natural duty. Also inherent qualities.

Dhyana; Contemplation; the seventh rung in the ladder of eightfold yoga.

Drik; Subject.

Drisya; Object.

G

Ganapati; The elder son of Lord Siva, the remover of obstacles. The same as Lord Ganesha, the Chief of Lord Siva's hosts.

Gudakesa; An epithet of Arjuna for having conquered sleep. Lord Krishna uses this term in addressing Arjuna.

Gunas; The three fundamental qualities, tendencies, or stresses which underlie all manifestation; *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, characterized as white, red and black respectively.

H

Homa; Sacrifice in fire.

Hridayam; The Heart (*Hridi*+*Ayam*=centre this.) The seat of Consciousness at the right side of the chest, as experienced and expounded by Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

I

Indra; The Lord of the *devas*. The first student of *Brahma viyda.* The Divine Mother was his Teacher.

Isa; The Supreme Lord.

Ishvara; The name of the Supreme Lord indicating his lordship of the worlds.

J

Jaganmaya; The mystery of the world.

Jiva; The individual soul or ego.

Jivan Mukta; One who has realized the Supreme Identity while still in the body.

Jivan Mukti; Deliverance while yet in this life.

Jnana; Knowledge of the Absolute transcending form and formlessness.

Jnana Marga; The Path of Knowledge.

Jnani; A Self-realized Man, a Sage; one who has attained Realization by the Path of Knowledge.

K

Kailas; A mountain in the Himalayas reputed to be the abode of Lord Siva.

Kaivalya; Absolute Oneness. Final emancipation. One of the 108 Upanishads.

Kali yuga; The last of the four ages of the world, namely *Krita, Treta, Dwapara,* and *Kali, Kali* is reckoned as having begun in 3102 B.C.

Kama; Desire. Physical love.

Karma; Action, work, deeds. Also fruits of action accumulating in three ways as *sanchita, prarabdha,* and *agami*, which see. Also destiny.

Karma Marga; The path of ritual, religious duties, and action.

Kevala Kumbhaka; Retention of breath leading to stilling of the mind, without inhalation or exhalation.

Kshetra; A sacred place of pilgrimage, a shrine. In Yoga, city, or the field of body.

Kshetrajna; The conscious principle (Known) in the field of the body. The absolute witness aware of the three states of the self—waking, dream, and sleep.

Kundalini; The mystic circle of three and a half coils situated in the umbilical region. The Yogic principle of serpent power. Primal Maya.

L

Laya; Absorption. In Yoga absorption of breath and mind in the heart.

M

Maharshi (*Maha Rishi*) ; Great Rishi or Sage.

Mahat; The intellectual principle as source of ahankara, which see. From the Absolute emanates the Unmanifest, from it *Mahat* and from *Mahat* the *ahamkara.*

Mahatma; A lofty soul ; highly spiritual person ; Master in tune with the infinite.

Mahavakya; The four main sentences, proclaiming the Truth of Brahman, one each from the Itareya (Aitareya) Upanishad of Rig Veda, Brihadaranyaka of Yajur Veda, Chandogya of Sama Veda and Mandukya of Atharva Veda. Also one of the 108 Upanishads explaining the Maha Vakyas.

Maheswara; One of the five aspects of Lord Siva, as veiling the Truth from souls, till their karma is completely worked out. Also, Lord Siva as Para-Brahman, the Absolute Being.

Manana; Contemplation. The second of the three stages of Vedantic realization.

Manas; Mind, reason, mentality. Also used for the aggregate of *chitta, buddhi, manas,* and *ahankara.*

Mantram (*Mantra*) ; Cosmic sound forms of the Vedas, used for worship and prayer. Also seed letters for meditation on the form of the Lord. Ritualistic incantation.

Marana; The art of causing death through supernatural powers.

Math; A meeting place and abode of Sadhus.

Maya; Illusion, false appearance. Manifestation or Illusion personified.

Mithya; The false.

Moksha; Liberation ; final emancipation ; release from transmigration.

Mouna; Silence. The Inexpressable. Truth of Brahman, expressed by the Brahman-knower by His mere abidance in stillness.

Mudra ; Hand pose in worship and dance.

Mukta ; A liberated man.

Mukti ; Liberation.

Mutt ; *See* math.

N

Nadi ; The 72,000 nerves of the body conveying the life force. Of these, *Ida*, *Pingala*, and *Sushumna* are three main ones. In the state of *samadhi* all of them are merged in the single '*Para*' or '*Amrita*' *Nadi*.

Nasha ; Destruction.

Nididhyasana ; The last of the three stages of Vedantic realization. Uninterrupted contemplation.

Nirasa ; Desirelessness.

Nirvikalpa Samadhi ; The highest state of concentration, in which the soul loses all sense of being different from the Universal Self, but a temporary state from which there is return to ego-consciousness.

Nischala Bhava ; Immobility ; steadfastness. Also Eternity.

Nishta ; Abidance in firm meditation.

Niyama ; Discipline : religious duties as ordained for the second of the eight stages of Yoga.

P

Padma ; Lotus ; in Yoga, a posture in which the right foot is placed on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh with proper hand pose.

Paramapada ; The Supreme state.

Paramarthika ; The true Self.

Paramatma ; The Supreme Self, the Universal Brahman.

Parantapa : An epithet of Arjuna, meaning he who destroys his enemy.

Partha ; Arjuna, the son of Pritha—another name for Kunti, his mother.

Prajnana Ghana ; Brahman ; the Absolute, immutable Knowledge.

Prakriti ; Primordial Substance out of which all things are created. The Primal Nature.

Pramada ; Swerving from abidance in the Absolute.

Prana ; The first of the ten vital airs centred in the heart.

Pranava Japa; Incantation of Om.

Pranayama; Breath control.

Prarabdha Karma; That part of destiny due to past action (Karma) which bears fruit in the present birth.

Prasthana Traya; The triple canon of Vedanta. The three Vedantic scriptural authorities: Upanishads, Brahma Sutras, Bhagavad Gita.

Pratyahara; Withdrawal of the senses from objectivity: the fifth rung in the ladder of Yoga.

Puranas; Eighteen sacred books ascribed to Vyasa, dealing with primary and secondary creation, genealogy of kings, etc.

Purnam; Fullness, Plenum, Infinite.

Purusha; Spirit, soul, the living principle.

Purushartha; Human ends; objectives worthy of human pursuit, *Dharma, Artha, Kama,* and *Moksha.*

R

Raghava; An epithet of Sri Rama as belonging to the line of Raghu.

Raja Yoga; The principal system of Yoga as taught by Patanjali.

Rajas; One of the three primal qualities, described as red, the principle of activity. (*See* guna).

Rishi; Sage. (See also Maharshi).

Rudra; Lord Siva in one of his five aspects. God as Destroyer.

S

Sada Siva; The Supreme Lord as eternal goodness.

Sad-Guru; The Great Master, the true or perfect Guru.

Sadhana; A path towards Liberation.

Sadhu; An ascetic or one who has renounced the world in quest of Liberation.

Sahasradala; The thousand petalled lotus; the centre of illumination experienced in the crown of the head on the Yogic path.

Sakshin; Witness.

Samana; One of the ten vital airs.

Sanchitha Karma; Accumulated Karma of former births that still remains to be experienced.

Sankalpa; Volition, mental activity, thought, tendencies, and attachment.

Sankhya ; One of the systems of Indian philosophy.
Sannyasa ; Renunciation.
Sannyasin ; One who has renounced the world.
Santodanta ; One who is calm and self-controlled.
Sarvatma Bhava ; The state of experiencing the Self as all. Abidance in the Oneness of Being.
Sastras ; Scriptures.
Sat ; Existence. Pure Being.
Satchidananda ; Being-Consciousness-Bliss.
Sattva ; Tendency to purity ; one of the three gunas (which see).
Savikalpa samadhi ; A state of consciousness in which the distinction between Knower, Knowledge, and Known is not yet lost.
Shakti (or *Sakti*) ; The manifesting energy of a Divine Aspect, represented mythologically as the wife of a God.
Siddha ; One endowed with supernatural powers and capable of performing miracles. One who has accomplished the end.
Siddhi ; Realization, attainment. Also supernatural powers.
Siva ; The Supreme Lord, also one of the Hindu Trinity.
Sivoham ; The incantation : 'I am Siva'.
Skanda ; The younger son of Lord Siva ; the leader of the divine hosts. The same as Lord Subrahmanya.
Smriti ; Authoritative Hindu scriptures other than the Vedas (*Sruti*).
Sraddha ; Earnestness, faith, a faithful acquisition of theoretical knowledge of Truth.
Sravana ; Hearing of the Truth, from the Master.
Sruti ; Vedas, heard by the Sages in their transcendental state and transmitted to disciples by word of mouth.
Sushupti—Deep sleep.
Svarupa Nishta ; Abidance in the Self.

T

Tamas ; Darkness, ignorance ; one of the three gunas (which see).
Tanmaya Nishta ; Abidance in the Self.
Tapas ; Religious austerities.
Tat ; That, Brahman.
Tattva jnana ; Knowledge of Brahman or Atman.
Tattvam ; Reality ; Truth ; Principle.
Tat-Tvam-Asi ; 'That thou Art'.

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Turiya; The fourth state; the witness Consciousness—ever present and unchanging as against the changing states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep.

U

Udana; One of the ten vital airs, having its seat in the neck.

Upadesa; The Spiritual guidance or teaching given by a Guru.

Upanishads; Philosophical writings forming part of the Vedas.

V

Vaikunta; The heaven of Vishnu.

Vairagya; Freedom from worldly desires; dispassion.

Vasanas; Predispositions, tendencies, or propensities of the mind in the present life due to the experiences of former lives.

Vasudeva; Lord Krishna, as the son of Vasudeva, the Lord whose manifestation all this world is. One of the 108 Upanishads showing the path of Vasudeva.

Veda; The sacred books of the Hindus: Rig, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva, revealed through the Rishis.

Vedanta; The Absolute Truth as established by the Upanishads, Brahma Sutras, and Bhagavad Gita as interpreted by Sri Vyasa. The end or consummation of the Vedas.

Veena; A string instrument.

Vichara; Enquiry into the truth of the Self.

Videhamukta; A Liberated Being after he has left the body.

Videhamukti; Self-Realization after leaving the body.

Vijnana; Knowledge; discriminating the real from the unreal.

Vijnanamarga; The path of discriminate Knowledge.

Vishnu; God as preserver. One of the Hindu Trinity.

Vishaya vasanas; Predisposition towards sense enjoyments.

Viveka; Discrimination.

Viyoga; Separation.

Vyana; One of the ten vital airs, causing the circulation of blood and pervading all the body.

Vyavaharika; The phenomenal or empirical.

Y

Yama; The first rung in the ladder of the eightfold Yoga; Self-control; abstention from lying, killing, theft, lust, covetuousness, etc.

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Notes on Pronunciation

The vowels in the transliteration here used have rather the Continental than the English values. They are approximately as follows :

a	as in father
e	between *e* in ten and *ai* in wait
i	between *i* in bid and *ee* in meet
o	between *o* in hot and *or* in short
u	between *u* in put and *oo* in shoot
ai	as *igh* in night
ou	as in pound.

The consonants are pronounced as in English, with the following exceptions :

1. A consonant between *v* and *w* but approximating more to *v* is transliterated by some writers as *v* and by others as *w*, as for instance in the two forms *Ishvara* and *Ishwara.*

2. A consonant between *s* and *sh* but approximating more to *sh* is transliterated by some writers as *s* and by others as *sh*, as for instance in the two forms *Isvara* and *Ishvara.*

This consonant is used in both *Siva* and *Vishnu*, but it has become usual to transliterate it as *s* in the former case and *sh* in the latter, and therefore that usage is followed here.

3. The words *jnani* and *jnana* are pronounced approximately as *gnyani* and *gnyana.*

4. *H* after a letter other than *s* or *c* does not change the letter but is slightly aspirated.

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